

The Video Professor

Applying Lessons in Sociology to Classic and Modern Films

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Table of Contents

Introduction

The Great American Film: A Part of Americana
Video as Pedagogy
Typical Assignments
Using the Uncut Videos and Not the Television Version
Being Sensitive to Situational Factors and Student Values
The Rating System of the Motion Picture Association of America
Legalities

Chapter One: Sociological Perspectives.....	1
Chapter Two: Research Methods.....	5
Chapter Three: Culture.....	8
Chapter Four: Society and Social Groups.....	13
Chapter Five: Socialization and Life Course.....	18
Chapter Six: Deviance and Social Control.....	23
Chapter Seven: Social Stratification.....	29
Chapter Eight: Race and Ethnicity.....	37
Chapter Nine: Gender, Sexuality, and Society.....	40
Chapter Ten: Age and Society.....	46
Chapter Eleven: Family and Society.....	52
Chapter Twelve: Religion and Society.....	56
Chapter Thirteen: Education and Society.....	59
Chapter Fourteen: Healthcare and Medicine.....	65

Table of Contents continued next page

Table of Contents
(continued)

Chapter Fifteen: Political Systems.....	71
Chapter Sixteen: Economic Systems.....	77
Chapter Seventeen: Collective Behavior and Social Change	81
Chapter Eighteen: Human Ecology and the Environment.....	85
Chapter Nineteen: Technology and Social Change.....	90
References and Sources.....	96

INTRODUCTION

The Great American Film: A Part of Americana

Everyone has a favorite film. Some are timeless classics and others recent box office hits. Some attempt to duplicate reality while others are fantasies. They may be docu-dramas based on the history of man or about some futuristic catastrophe. The variations in style and content have no boundaries. But they all have something in common. Movies have become a major part of the American culture. They represent the way people think, their value systems, beliefs, and aspirations. Movies can help us make sense out of the world. They contribute towards establishing a feeling of solidarity and can be instruments of social change or maintaining the status quo. They help us develop a concept of self and give us a sense of identity. In addition to all of this, they permit us to escape our daily routines, relax, and be entertained.

The highly complex, technical marvel of film that we take for granted today traces its beginning to the genius and inspiration of Thomas Edison. On May 9, 1893 Edison previewed the Kinetoscope at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. In his patent application, Edison described the Kinetoscope as “a device that would do for the eye what the phonograph does for the ear”. For nearly ten years, this new concept of motion pictures had a minimum impact on the lives of the average American. Perhaps the greatest contribution made by motion pictures in its first ten years was the production of documentaries related to the Spanish American War of 1898. It wasn’t until 1903 that the commercially released film, *The Great Train Robbery*, made an appreciable impact on the American public. In their silent format, films continued to grow in popularity. The first talking movie, *Don Juan*, was released by Warner Brothers in 1926 but it failed to win over the industry or the public as a superior form of entertainment over the well established silent films. It wasn’t until *The Jazz Singer*, starring Al Jolson, was released a year later that the “talkies” were accepted by the studios and movie goers as the wave of the future. Taking in \$3.5 million dollars, a tidy sum in the late 20s, *The Jazz Singer* demonstrated just how lucrative the film industry could be. In 1930, a *Fortune* magazine stated, “the advent of American talking movies is beyond comparison the fastest and most amazing revolution in the whole history of industrial revolutions”.

Since the effective union of sound and picture, the movie industry has experienced a number of other significant changes and innovations. Technicolor, Cinemascope, computer animation, and unbelievable advancements in special effects have added stark realism to even the most unbelievable scenes. But perhaps the greatest change in consumerism related to the film industry is the advent of the inexpensive video cassette recorder and video tape. Movies have become a staple of American home life. Even though nothing beats the “big silver screen” for effect, the video cassette allows families to view their favorite films over and over. They have also become an innovative tool in education, making it possible to use the entertaining value of a multi-million dollar production to illustrate a basic educational concept.

Today, the industry grosses over nine billion dollars a year, earning \$9.37 billion in 2002 and \$9.27 billion in 2003. One studio alone, Disney, accounted for over three billion dollars in box office receipts in 2003, making it the first studio to reach the three billion dollar mark in a single year. These numbers alone prove Americans love their movies, in all their forms. Although every

film may not be a model for the classroom, many certainly are. Regardless of their genre...westerns, love stories, action/adventure, docu-dramas, science fiction, horror films, and even animated fairy tales...movies have the potential to be a major part of classroom pedagogy. This is especially true in the social sciences. The purpose of this guide is to introduce instructors to the use of videos in their courses, both for introductory courses and upper level courses. To do so will add a sense of entertainment, diversity, and challenge that add a special inspiration to the learning process.

Video as Pedagogy

The use of film as a teaching aid in the classroom has been quite common in both the K through 12 curriculum and in college courses. Initially, the 16 mm reel to reel projector was the primary tool used to show films. The films shown were usually educationally based documentaries or lessons on specific topics. They were often expensive to rent and available for viewing only for a specified period of a few days. To purchase it, a well made 16 mm educational film often costs several hundred dollars.

The introduction of the inexpensive video cassette player approximately twenty years ago added an entirely new dimension to the use of film in the classroom. Although the cost of renting or purchasing documentaries has remained relatively unchanged, the ease in which a video cassette can be shown to the class is a considerable improvement over the reel to reel 16 mm effort. Rooms no longer need to be darkened, tapes seldom break, and the equipment is much more reliable. Specific segments of a film can be paused for discussion or rewound and watched again for emphasis. Tapes can be easily stored and transported from one classroom to another. In addition, the video cassette opens an almost limitless supply of inexpensive documentaries, docu-dramas, and commercially made movies that can be adapted to lessons in sociology, psychology, history, and many other disciplines.

To effectively use a commercially made movie in the classroom, however, requires greater preparation and screening on the part of the instructor. Traditional documentaries and other films dedicated to the education market are designed to convey specific information on a specific topic. The lesson is prepared by education professionals in a manner and style consistent with proper pedagogical technique, language, and purpose. They are usually restricted to a time frame consistent with the duration of an average class. Although the commercially released video cassette of a Hollywood film may be more interesting and entertaining, the emphasis of the producer is to “entertain” and not necessarily to “educate”. In view of this, Hollywood films that may convey excellent examples of concepts, perspectives, or historical events may also spend considerable time in developing a plot using fictitious characters. The language used in the film may be offensive, as well as the content of certain scenes. In addition, a Hollywood film cannot stand alone as a complete lesson in lieu of quality instruction or replace an academic effort on the part of the student. The commercial film is primarily used to illustrate and not to substitute. The Hollywood film will also average two hours in length. To show a commercial movie in a typical college class would consume an entire week’s class time. In view of these considerations, the instructor should either confine the showing of a commercial film to specific clips in class that have been previewed as appropriate and most pertinent to the purpose the film is being used, or assign the film as an out-of-class assignment.

When an appropriate movie is chosen to illustrate a concept or perspective, it stimulates the imagination of students and advances sociological thinking. With twists in plots and changing scenarios, students will ask questions and question answers. As Peter Berger exclaimed, “Things are not what they seem”, especially in the plot of a good mystery or action/adventure film.

Film can be an excellent instrument to either advance or challenge social change. In 1915, *The Birth of a Nation* became a landmark film that set the stage for race relations for decades. Described as a controversial, explicitly racist, but landmark American masterpiece, the film blamed the newly freed African American slaves for the social ills of the time. Gaining widespread acceptance by the public, the film earned over \$18 million, making it the highest grossing film for over two decades following its release. Highly popular, it was featured at a private screening in the White House where President Woodrow Wilson commented, “It’s like writing history with lightning. And my only regret is that it is all terribly true”. Still considered as delivering a powerful message, the film was used for years as a recruitment tool by the Ku Klux Klan. Other, more contemporary films, addressing social change and race relations include *Men of Honor* (2000), *American History X* (1998), *Mississippi Burning* (1988), and *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962).

A common criticism of Hollywood has been that movies reinforce stereotypes of the sexes. Male characters usually outnumber female characters. Leading men are often significantly older than the leading lady to whom they are paired. Gender age is reinforced with older men usually being portrayed as wise, innovative, and courageous as they come to the rescue of the “damsel in distress”. Even though many movies continue to express these views, there are others that break the mold of male dominance. In *A League of Their Own* (1992), women demonstrate their effectiveness as baseball players replacing the men who have gone off to fight in World War II. Michelle Yeoh and Halle Barry have redefined the role of the leading lady in the James Bond films and Lara Croft, an adventure seeking archeologist, is the essence of a new gender image. An organized effort to dispel sexism in the movies is led by the organization *Women Make Movies*. Its executive director, Debra Zimmerman, has said, “I believe that social change happens one person at a time”. As a part of the feminist movement, *Women Make Movies* is the largest distributor of films and videos by and about women in North America.

Typical Assignments.

An instructor may elect to show a clip from a movie that illustrates a specific concept or presents a specific scenario relative to the course content being studied. He or she may then solicit individual comments from the class based on their observations, conclusions, and concerns.

If appropriate, the instructor can divide the class into small groups and assign each group a different perspective on the video clip viewed. For example, does Lara Croft present the essence of a new gender image or does she simply present a new stereotype of women that seeks to replace the present one? A spokesperson from each group can share their conclusions with the class to further advance the exercise.

Take home assignments in the form of short papers can be made that address a specific theme of the clips shown in class. In some cases, several movies that address the same theme can be

offered as the source of the essay, permitting the student to choose the particular movie that appeals most to them for the assignment. Such assignments can sometimes be used for extra credit. A choice of assignments can be made part way through the semester after students have been exposed to sufficient theory and subject matter to grasp the assignment. Due dates can be set that permit sufficient time for students to make oral presentations on their papers or to use specific papers that are matched to the proper chapters under study.

A few examples of the general essay themes include the following:

How is the concept of symbolic interactionism conveyed through the content of the movie *Shrek*?

How does the movie *Antz* portray the concept of structural functionalism?

Choose one of the three major sociological perspectives (Symbolic Interactionism, Structural Functionalism, or the Conflict Perspective) and apply it to the film *Apollo 13*.

After viewing *Donnie Brasco*, *Pulp Fiction*, or *The Godfather*, present a single theory of deviance that would explain the behavior of the criminals featured in the movie. Apply the specific traits of the theory chosen to the characters, providing examples of their behavior that support this application in the movie's content.

In this guide, there are nineteen topics that are comparable to the chapter headings in most introductory textbooks. Each topic includes a number of movies with specific assignments and suggestions for class use. At least one movie is listed in detail with a synopsis of the films actors and plot.

Using the Uncut Video and Not the Television Version

Although many of the films suggested in this guide may be shown by the major television networks, it is suggested the video cassette version be used by students rather than reliance on the version released to the major networks. Between the dubbing out of selected phrases and scenes, movies released to the networks are often cut in content. *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), for example, was cut by 29 minutes when shown on network television. *The Fisher King* (1991) was cut by 25 minutes. Even the PG-13 rated *Mrs. Doubtfire* (1993) that was described as "a crowd pleasing comedy" was cut by fifteen minutes. Movies shown on the premium movie channels such as HBO, Starz, Showtime, and Cinemax are usually uncut and would be acceptable substitutes for the video cassette. The only drawback to relying on the televised versions of the films are if they are offered during the course of the semester. Since a student viewing a movie on a premium channel would be doing so for personal use, it would not be illegal for them to copy it on their own video cassette recorder if they have the capability to do so.

Being Sensitive to Situational Factors and Student Values

The subject of "gratuitous sex and violence" is often raised as an issue associated with both television shows and in the movie industry. This is especially true for movies. In order to avoid

subjecting students to material they consider as indecent or offensive, the instructor must be sensitive to individual student values when assigning movies and showing clips from movies in class. The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) offers a rating system that may be used to guide the choice of movies, especially when a specific movie is suggested for an assignment. This does not prohibit using a clip from a movie rated “R” or “NC-17”, but it does suggest caution to see that the clip used is not inappropriate. In addition, when making take-home assignments based on movies, the student should have some flexibility or alternative in selecting a film consistent with their personal values. As a part of the synopsis provided on each movie, the MPAA rating is included as well as applicable notes of caution for each film.

The Ratings System of the Motion Picture Association of America

To facilitate the selection of films for use, the ratings used by the MPAA will be a part of every movie featured in this guide. The abbreviations and their explanations are as follows:

G	General Audiences	All ages admitted.
PG	Parental Guidance Suggested	Some material may not be suitable for children.
PG-13	Parents Strongly Cautioned	Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.
R	Restricted	Children under 17 require accompanying parent or adult guardian.
NC-17	No Children Under 17 Admitted	Age may vary in certain areas.

It is noted the abbreviations GP, M, and X are no longer used to classify films.

Legalities

Educators should be familiar with the copyright laws of the jurisdiction or country where the video is being shown. In the United States, instructors utilizing video tape for educational purposes in a classroom setting are covered by the “face-to-face teaching exemption”, Section 110 (1) of the copyright law. To fall under this exemption, the video must be a legitimate copy (not copied from broadcast or another video), shown in a classroom of a non-profit educational institution for instructional purposes only (F.A.C. T., 1987). Viewing in other settings, or for which admission is charged, is not acceptable. Many video stores include clauses in their membership contracts which forbid rental of their videos for any use other than home viewing. If such a contractual agreement exists, it supercedes any rights offered under the “face to face exemption” (F.A.C.T. 1987).

Chapter One

Sociological Perspectives

Shrek (2001)

Major Application: Sociological Perspectives

Secondary Applications: Culture, Society and Social Groups, Socialization and Life the Course, Social Stratification

Major Characters: Mike Myers as the voice of Shrek
Cameron Diaz as the voice of Princess Fiona
Eddie Murphy as the voice of Donkey
John Lithgow as the voice of Lord Farquaad of Duloc

MPAA Rating: PG Mild language and some crude humor

Synopsis of Film: This amusing story takes advantage of a number of popular fairy tales and stereotypes to which we have all fallen prey. In doing so, it teaches us lessons about the concepts of beauty, human interaction, and socialization.

The story begins by introducing Shrek, a giant, reclusive, and ill-mannered ogre content living alone in a swamp. But Shrek's privacy is suddenly disturbed as he finds a number of his neighbors encroaching on his privacy. Included among the trespassers are Snow White, the Seven Dwarfs, Gingerbread Man, the Three Blind Mice, Pinocchio, Red Riding Hood, and others. It seems the evil Lord Farquaad is making a move to exert his power in the kingdom of Duloc which displaces a number of the residents. To regain his privacy, Shrek agrees to rescue a beautiful princess for Farquaad, who in turn, will grant Shrek exclusive rights to the swamp. The princess is intended to be Farquaad's bride which will elevate him from Lord to King.

Joining Shrek on his quest to rescue Fiona is an annoying, but well meaning chatterbox donkey. Together they fight a fire breathing dragon and overcome various physical obstacles to rescue the Princess. The tale takes a twist, however, before the major characters can live "happily ever after" in the tradition of all good stories.

Although the plot may seem trite and predictable, this animated film is totally enjoyable by children and adults alike. A well done musical score accents the excellent animation. Princess Fiona bears a striking resemblance to the real Cameron Dias as does Lord Farquaad to John Lithgow. Although it would be inappropriate to compare Myers or Murphy as resembling Shrek or Donkey, the personality of these two as well as their mannerisms and style were perfect matches for the characters they portray.

The tale presents an excellent illustration of the three sociological perspectives, especially how human interaction relies on symbols and their meaning.

Exercises and Questions

1. How does the appearance of Lord Farquaad violate the stereotypes of what constitutes royalty? How does he compensate for his failure to meet the stereotype?
 2. After meeting Donkey, Shrek tells him that ogres are like onions. Using this analogy, explain in detail what you believe Shrek meant.
 3. How does the manner in which Lord Farquaad rules Duloc illustrate the conflict perspective?
 4. What is the symbolic stereotype displayed by Princess Fiona when she is first rescued by Shrek? How is this stereotype contradicted later in the film?
 5. What stereotypes can be applied to the character played by the dragon? How are these stereotypes later contradicted as well as reinforced later in the film?
 6. Prepare a short essay on how the film *Shrek* demonstrates all three of the sociological perspectives, including structural functionalism, conflict, and symbolic interactionism.
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Apollo 13 (1995)

Major Application: Sociological Perspectives

Secondary Applications: Education and Society, Political Systems, Collective Behavior and Social Change, Technology and Social Change

Major Characters: Tom Hanks as Jim Lovell, Mission Commander
Bill Paxton as Fred Haise
Kevin Bacon as Jack Swigert
Gary Sinise as Ken Mattingly
Ed Harris as Gene Kranz
Kathleen Quinlan as Marilyn Lovell

MPAA Rating: PG Language and Emotional Intensity

Synopsis of Film: In the Cold War, the Soviet Union held a decisive advantage over the United States in a number of different areas. The most obvious of these was the Soviet accomplishments in space exploration. Soviet achievements included launching the first artificial satellite to orbit the earth, sending the first man and the first woman into space, and sending the first unmanned rocket to the moon. But in the mid-60s the United States slowly overtook the Soviets as the leaders in space exploration which came to a dramatic highlight as Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon on July 20, 1969. On the third manned mission to the moon (Apollo 13), an explosion in the spacecraft's service module crippled the spacecraft's life support system. Not only did it scrub the lunar mission, it nearly cost the lives of the three astronauts, Jim Lovell

(Tom Hanks), Fred Haise (Bill Paxton), and Jack Swigert (Kevin Bacon). It was only through a concentrated team effort and remarkable ingenuity by the three astronauts and NASA engineers that the Apollo capsule was able to safely return to earth. Anyone who can remember following this dramatic story first hand in 1970 will usually place it among the most memorable news events in their lifetime.

As a creation of Hollywood, *Apollo 13* had a perfect combination of cast, director, and writers. As a true story, it is a tribute to the skill and dedication of the personnel who contributed to the space program, not only as astronauts, but also as flight directors, engineers, and in every aspect of the program. *Apollo 13* also carries with it a number of potential lessons to in understanding society and social interaction.

Exercises and Questions

1. Identify how the American space program, and specifically the rescue of the Apollo 13 crew, serves as an example of the functionalist perspective.
2. How does the American space program serve as an example of symbolic interactionism?
3. From a national and international perspective, how does the American space program serve as an example of the conflict perspective?
4. How does the cancellation of the live broadcast from Apollo 13 prior to the explosion in the service module contribute to the symbolic interactionist perspective in understanding the significance of the space program and how the public responded to it by the time Apollo 13 was launched?
5. How has the image of the space program based on the three sociological perspectives changed from the late 60s and early 70s to the manner it is viewed today following the two devastating accidents to the space shuttles *Challenger* and *Columbia*?
6. How did the space program in the 1960s serve as a method of promoting social solidarity? How did it serve as an example of in-group/out-group relationships both on the macro level of international relations and on the micro level among members of the crews? How and why has the program changed as it relates to uniting Americans in a common cause?
7. What type of leadership styles are demonstrated by Gene Kranz and Jim Lovell? Were these the best styles of leadership for their positions? Why or why not?
8. Describe how the concept of “group think,” as described by sociologist Irving Janis, contribute to the Challenger and Columbia disasters.
9. How did the effort to rescue the crew of Apollo 13 reflect the concept of sociological thinking?
10. How did the space program become a matter of dysfunction to American society?

Other Films to Consider

Antz (1998). This entertaining computer-animated feature is about an ant named “Z” who doesn’t respond well to regimentation. After becoming involved with the queen ant’s daughter, Princess Bala, Z becomes even more rebellious to be delegated to nothing more than a worker ant. Through a mix-up in his involvement with a soldier ant, Z becomes a hero under the command of a megalomaniacal general who has his own agenda as to what is best for the colony. In addition to demonstrating the three sociological perspectives, the film also serves as an example to illustrate the concepts of the power elite, leadership styles, and social stratification. Rated PG.

Falling Down (1993). Michael Douglas plays a laid-off defense worker who has the ultimate “bad day.” After playing by the rules his entire life in ritualistic fashion, he finally snaps when various members of society obstruct every goal he sets for himself, including a simple matter such as ordering breakfast at a fast-food restaurant. Douglas embarks on a violent crime spree in which he confronts members of the underground, the police, and his own family. This film can be used to illustrate the manifest and latent functions of several social institutions as well as their dysfunctions. It can also be used to examine the three sociological perspectives, several forms of deviant behavior, and social control. Rated R.

Planet of the Apes (2001). This film is a remake of one of the most popular science fiction films of all time. After being lost in space, an American astronaut finds himself trapped on a planet where the dominant population is composed of an advanced level of talking apes. Not only are humans the minority population, they are only semi-literate and do not have the ability to communicate through speech. The film illustrates how the ape colony can be viewed from a functionalist, conflict, or symbolic interactionist perspective. Within the ape populations are also various divisions that help illustrate the sociological concepts of status, role, social interaction, and the power elite. Rated PG-13.

Saving Private Ryan (1998). This is an action-packed account of an American army squad in World War II. After surviving the Normandy invasion, a squad of G.I.s is assigned a seemingly impossible job of locating and returning one lone American soldier trapped somewhere behind enemy lines. How does the organization of the military units involved serve as examples of the functionalist perspective, conflict perspective, and symbolic interactionism? Rated R.

The Day the Earth Stood Still (1951). This science fiction classic capitalized on the flying saucer hype of the late 40’s and early 50’s to be one of the major Hollywood blockbusters when it was released in 1951. Starring Michael Rennie, Sam Jaffe, and Patricia Neal it illustrates the world’s fear of inter-galactic terror that dominated the time. Identify the symbolic importance of the material culture illustrated in the film, including the saucer, the alien visitor, and his robot. Also consider why the threat of invaders from outer space was symbolic for the fear Americans had for the “Red Scare” of the time period. Not Rated.

Chapter Two Research Methods

Young Frankenstein (1974)

Major Application: Research Methods

Secondary Applications: Culture, Society and Social Groups, Socialization and Life the Course, Social Stratification, Deviance and Social Control, Healthcare and Medicine, Technology and Social Change

Major Characters: Gene Wilder as Dr. Frederick Frankenstein, grandson of Dr. Victor Frankenstein
Peter Boyle as “The Monster”, created by Frederick Frankenstein
Marty Feldman as Igor, Victor’s assistant in creating the first monster
Madeline Kahn as Elizabeth, Frederick’s fiancée
Cloris Leachman as Frau Blucher, caretaker of the Frankenstein estate
Teri Garr as Inga, Frederick’s personal lab assistant

MPAA Rating: PG Mild language and some suggested sexuality

Synopsis of Film: Dr. Victor Frankenstein’s grandson, Frederick, has spent his life living down the family reputation. He inherits granddad’s castle and uses his grandfather’s original lab to repeat the experiments creating a modern version of the monster.

Presented as a satirical remake of the 1931 classic, Mel Brooks directed and rewrote parts of this version presenting a kinder and gentler monster. Mixed with typical Mel Brooks humor, *Young Frankenstein* follows the original classic template but provides a unique twist to the tale.

Originally embarrassed by the work of his grandfather, Frederick has pursued a career in medicine but is devoted to teaching traditional medicine and not conducting medical research as his grandfather had done. All this changes after Frederick inherits his grandfather’s castle and stumbles across the original notes and laboratory in which his grandfather created the infamous monster. Driven by the same passion as Victor, young Frederick is assisted by grandfather’s original assistant, Igor (Marty Feldman), and a beautiful young assistant, Inga (Teri Garr) who provides a competitive love interest to the fiancée, Elizabeth (Madeline Kahn).

The issues raised in this satirical version of *Young Frankenstein* are very similar to those raised in the 1931 classic horror film. This version of *Young Frankenstein* provides a more entertaining source for the exercise.

Exercises and Questions

1. Identify the various sources Frederick Frankenstein used in his research.
2. Frederick’s research best fits which research method or research design and why?

3. How does Frederick's research qualify as an example of replication? In the process of replication, what variables were different for Frederick compared to the original work of his grandfather, Victor? How were the conclusions reached by Frederick similar and different from those reached by his grandfather during the original experiment?
 4. Why does research have a tendency to threaten some members of society? What threats did the research of Victor and Frederick Frankenstein have upon the members of the local village and why? How would this research threaten the ideology and value systems of other social institutions including family, religion, and education?
 5. How does the research of the Frankenstein's compare to the research controversy today that addresses cloning, stem cell research, and other research addressing the creation of life?
 6. Create two lists, one that addresses the issues addressed by Frederick that were purely a matter of the natural (medical) sciences and another that addresses the social and ethical issues that needed to be addressed before, during, and after the experiment.
 7. Should there be limitations placed on scientific research? Just because science can accomplish certain goals, such as cloning human beings, should it be permitted to do so? If not, who should be in charge of making the decisions as to what science can or cannot explore?
 8. If you or someone close to you were in need of a controversial medical procedure that was illegal but within the capability of medical science, how would you address it?
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Other Films to Consider

Awakenings (1990). Robin Williams plays a doctor seeking an effective drug to treat Parkinson's disease. An extraneous theme to this excellent depiction of a true incident is the actual experiment, using increased quantities of a new drug as the variable, which produced astounding results. Based on your viewing of *Awakenings* identify the types of research were used to discover the truth of what happened. What are the strengths and drawbacks of using such methods? What alternative methods could be used? Rated PG-13.

Conspiracy Theory (1997). Jerry Fletcher (Mel Gibson) is a New York City cab driver and conspiracy buff. He uses an assortment of resources and methods to investigate his personal theories on government activity and publishes them in his own newsletter. One of Jerry's theories hits too close to revealing a true government conspiracy that results in the efforts of a radical government agency to silence him. In *Conspiracy Theory*, what form of reasoning (inductive or deductive) does Jerry use in developing his theories? Why did you choose that answer? Using the research model, trace one of Jerry's theories described in the film and provide a short critique of how well he accomplished each stage of the model (selecting a topic, defining the problem, reviewing the literature, and so on)? Rated R.

Gorillas in the Mist (1988). This absorbing drama is based on the life of Dian Fossey (Sigourney Weaver) who journeys to Africa in 1967 to document the vanishing breed of mountain gorillas for *National Geographic*. In the movie she transforms from diligent researcher to obsessive madwoman that may be more Hollywood than history. In *Gorillas in the Mist*, explain how Dian Fossey utilizes participant-observation in her research. How and why does she become more participant than observer? Are there other films you have seen or real life examples of research you are aware of in which the same methods were used? Rated PG-13.

Jurassic Park (1993). The original Spielberg directed yarn about two paleontologists (Sam Neill and Laura Dern) who accept an offer from billionaire Richard Attenborough to inspect his island dinosaur amusement park. Things go wrong when the dinos escape their restraints and wreck havoc on the island's human visitors. Part comedy, part thriller, part horror film, *Jurassic Park* is entertaining and enlightening in this day of clones and genetic experimentation. Describe the differences in motivation between Attenborough and Neill and Dern in conducting their research. If science has the ability to create life, as Attenborough does in the film, should it? Why or why not? Rated PG-13.

Outbreak (1995). A techno-thriller starring Dustin Hoffman, Rene Russo, and Cuba Gooding Jr., *Outbreak* illustrates how a group of scientists research the cause and origin of a rare killer virus. Although the virus has the potential to result in a global biological meltdown, their efforts are hampered by high-ranking military officials who wish to preserve the virus as a possible weapon. In *Outbreak*, how does social research become as important as the medical research illustrated in the film? Explain how this teamwork between the two sciences is necessary in other research as well using a specific issue or disease as an example. Rated R.

Titanic (1997). This film is an excellent version of one of history's greatest blunders, told in a documentary style. Titanic's passengers included representatives of two distinct cultures, one aristocratic and the other poor immigrants. The culture and the reasons each group has for being on the ill-fated trip are expertly portrayed. After viewing the film, identify all the different research methods that were used in recreating the account of the ill-fated Titanic. Also, determine what was the one important bit of information that the efforts of the research team failed to uncover and why. Rated PG-13.

Chapter Three Culture

Mr. Baseball (1992)

Major Application: Culture

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Society and Social Groups, Socialization and the Life Course, Social Stratification, Collective Behavior, and Social Change, Technology and Social Change

Major Characters: Tom Selleck as Jack Elliot, a power hitter for the New York Yankees on the wane traded to a Japanese team, the Chaneechie Dragons
Ken Takakura as Coach Uchiyama, manager of the Chaneechie Dragons
Aya Takanashi as Hiroko Uchiyama, love interest of Elliot's and Coach Uchiyama's daughter
Dennis Haysbert as Max "Hammer" Dubois, a fellow American playing with the Dragons
Toshi Shioya as Yoji Nishimura, Elliot's translator

MPAA Rating: PG-13 Some scenes objectionable, mild language

Synopsis of Film: Jack Elliot (Tom Selleck) is an aging New York Yankee power hitter who has just experienced a bad year at the plate. Because of a slumping batting average and a rising star pushing Elliot out of the lineup, the Yankees put Elliot on the trading block. The only team interested in him is the Chaneechie Dragons of Japan. Arriving in Japan, Elliot is met by his personal interpreter and guide, Yoji, who tries to help Elliot make a smooth transition to Japanese customs. But the ethnocentric and head strong Elliot belittles his Japanese counterparts and quickly alienates himself from his teammates, coach, and even the other Americans playing ball in Japan. It becomes painfully clear to Mr. Baseball, as Elliot is called, that he has much to learn from his fellow players and coach if he is to rise to his potential. Adding to Elliot's difficulties is a love interest he develops with a beautiful Japanese woman, Hiroko, who, unknown to Elliot, is the daughter of his coach.

Mr. Baseball presents a humorous illustration of many of the key concepts required to understand culture. Included among these are ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, culture shock, diffusion, reformulation, and others. The movie is a tribute to the Japanese culture for its openness and perfection in taking the best the world has to offer, and making it better. In addition to baseball, this concept is further supported as Elliot enjoys the best steak he has ever eaten on a dinner date with Hiroko.

Exercises and Questions

1. In the beginning of the film, Elliot's agent informs him his advertisements and endorsements are being pulled due to an "image problem." How is this related to the

sociological perspective of symbolic interactionism? Can you name any true-life experiences where athletes have lost endorsements for similar reasons?

2. How do physical differences as well as cultural differences contribute to Elliot's problems as he is introduced to the Dragon's executive board by Yoji?
3. What is "kyginks"? What is the symbolism associated with the term?
4. Describe how baseball in Japan is a combination of diffusion and reformulation.
5. Provide at least three specific examples of how baseball has been modified by the Japanese to better reflect their cultural values (reformulation). You may wish to examine the players, fans, and managerial style.
6. Provide examples in the film of how messages were misunderstood in their translation from one language to another.
7. Identify some examples of ethnocentrism Elliot expressed in his comments and behavior when entering Japan and joining the team.
8. How do Elliot's Japanese teammates serve as a secondary group in the beginning of the film and evolve into a primary group as Elliot becomes more in touch with his new environment?
9. When does Elliot finally experience cultural relativism? How does this affect his overall behavior and performance with the team? Why do you think it has this impact?
10. Compare and contrast the material and non-material culture of American baseball with the material and non-material culture of Japanese baseball as illustrated by the players and coaches as well as the fans.

Coming to America (1988)

Major Application: Culture

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Research Methods, Society and Social Groups, Socialization and the Life Course, Social Stratification, Sexuality, Gender, and Society, Collective Behavior and Social Change

Major Characters: Eddie Murphy as Prince Akeem, a young African prince frustrated with being pampered and having his life preplanned by his parents. (Murphy also plays Clarence, Randy, Watson, and Saul)

Arsenio Hall as Semmi, Akeem's loyal companion, trainer, and advisor.
Hall also plays the girl at the bar, Morris, and Reverend Brown)
James Earl Jones as King Jaffe Joffer, Akeem's father
Madge Sinclair as Queen Aoleon, Akeem's mother
John Amos as Cleo McDowell, owner of McDowell's and father of Lisa
Shari Headley as Lisa McDowell, Akeem's love interest in Queens
Allison Dean as Patrice, Lisa's sister
Paul Bates as Oha, the King's assistant and coordinator of activities
Vanessa Bell as Imani Izzi, Akeem's prearranged bride
Eriq LaSalle as Darryl Jenks, Lisa McDowell's boyfriend
Frankie Faison as the Queens landlord
Louie Anderson as Maurice, Akeem's co-worker at McDowell's
Samuel L. Jackson as the holdup man

MPAA Rating: PG-13 Brief nudity, some scenes objectionable, harsh language

Synopsis of Film: Prince Akeem (Eddie Murphy) is the son of King Jaffe Joffer (James Earl Jones) ruler of a small African nation. Frustrated with his pampered life style that includes an arranged marriage, Akeem embarks for America to find himself and search for a bride of his own choosing. Accompanying him is his personal advisor and close friend, Semmi (Arsenio Hall) who approves of the trip but disapproves of Akeem's desire to live in America as a commoner.

After his attempt to meet the proper woman for his bride at a local bar, Akeem seeks the advice of Clarence, an older gentleman he has befriended. Clarence suggests Akeem try meeting women at the public library or church. At a religious revival commemorating Black Awareness Week, Akeem meets Lisa McDowell, daughter of Cleo McDowell, who is working at the service as a volunteer. For Akeem it is love at first sight, but Lisa rejects Akeem's advances, in part due to her existing relationship with Darryl Jenks (Eriq LaSalle) and the wishes of her father to marry Jenks.

In order to get closer to Lisa, Akeem and Semmi take jobs at McDowell's, a fast food burger joint with a strikingly similar appearance and menu to McDonald's. The remainder of the film concentrates on Akeem's continued advances for the affections of Lisa and the uncovering of Darryl as having less than honorable intentions. By the end of the film, Lisa recognizes Darryl for his manipulative ways and falls for Akeem. The only loose end Akeem needs to tie up is the reaction of his parents after he decides to marry an "average American girl."

Exercises and Questions

1. How is material culture used by the royal members of the palace to separate them from the nation's common people? How do the rich and powerful in America use culture to separate themselves from the common people?
2. What stereotypes of America did Akeem and Semmi have when they first arrived in Queens? What stereotypes of Africans did Darryl express?

3. Compare and contrast the material and non-material culture Akeem and Semmi experienced in their homeland to what they experienced in Queens.
 4. How does Darryl exercise the concept of ethnocentrism against Akeem while they are attending the St. Johns basketball game?
 5. How does Lisa's life in Queens parallel Akeem's in his home nation?
 6. How does language transcend culture as illustrated by Akeem's comments to Mr. McDowell when he discussed the Giants-Packer game and Lisa's comments to Akeem about the way he talks just prior to the holdup man (Samuel L. Jackson) enters McDowell's?
 7. How does the effort of Akeem lay the foundation of a sociocultural evolution in his native African country?
 8. Identify modern examples of regimented societies that are divided in similar ways as Akeem's royal family.
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Other Films to Consider

An Innocent Man (1989) Jimmie Rainwood (Tom Selleck) had it all....a great job, a loving wife, and a beautiful home in the suburbs. But all of this is swept away as Rainwood is wrongfully accused and convicted of a major felony. He is thrust into the quagmire of the penitentiary where his world turns upside down and inside out. This new environment requires Rainwood to learn an entirely new set of standards, values, and behavior if he is to survive. This is a vivid tale of counterculture and resocialization. After viewing the film, describe how the prison population qualifies as being a subculture and the gang to which Jingles belongs is more appropriately a counterculture. How do police in general qualify as a subculture, but crooked cops such as the two who set up Rainwood qualify as a counterculture? Isolate and discuss the many differences that face Jimmie Rainwood in his new "home." Include both the differences in material culture and non-material culture that Rainwood must master. What is the new "moral code" that Rainwood must embrace if he is to successfully adapt?

G.I. Jane (1997). Demi Moore is gutsy Lieutenant Jordan O'Neil, the first woman to be given the opportunity to earn a place in the armed forces' elite SEAL team. Everything about her transition to a sea, air, and land soldier presents a new set of challenges and obstacles that only a SEAL could understand. The military has a culture of its own, but elite units such as the SEALs are even further divided from the mainstream culture. After watching the film, identify specific instances where one needs to employ cultural relativism to understand the culture of an elite military such as the Seals. What issues in the movie qualify as being examples of the relativist fallacy? How do the Seals qualify as being a subculture within a subculture?

Gone With the Wind (1939). Perhaps the most famous movie of all time, *Gone With the Wind* presents a number of cultures in conflict...political, economic, social, and racial. An examination

of this classic epic helps the viewer gain insight into understanding the social and political differences that exist today in these same areas. In *Gone With the Wind* what are the competing cultures related to racial, political, economic, and class differences? What are some of the unique ideologies of each of these competing subcultures?

The Coneheads (1993). In this spin-off of one of *Saturday Night Live*'s most popular skits, an alien family crashes to earth, and sets up housekeeping for 20 years as they await a rescue craft to arrive from their home planet Remulak. Beldar and Prymaat Conehead give the term "assimilation" a whole new meaning in their adaptation to American culture. In *The Coneheads*, how do Beldar and Prymaat Conehead adapt to the Earthling way of life? What is it about their successful adaptation that can be explained by cultural relativism and cultural diffusion? How does language play a role in the Coneheads' understanding of Earthling culture and the personal terms they develop for various aspects of Earth culture? What norms, folkways, and mores do the Coneheads possess that are different from other members of their community and in conflict with the values held by their daughter?

Witness (1985). Harrison Ford plays a big city detective and Kelly McGillis an attractive young Amish woman in this detective tale set in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Ford seeks refuge at an Amish farm after being seriously injured by the criminals he is pursuing. As he convalesces he blends into the Amish community as one of its members. Blending in, however, is more difficult than either Ford or McGillis realize as their separate cultural values present numerous adjustment difficulties. Develop an essay that identifies the competing cultures illustrated in the film (the Amish versus the "English") that includes their material and non-material culture.

Chapter Four

Society and Social Groups

The Terminal (2004)

Major Application: Society and Social Groups

Secondary Applications: Culture, Socialization and Life the Course, Social Stratification, Deviance and Social Control, Race and Ethnicity, Political Systems

Major Characters: Tom Hanks as Viktor Navorski, a visitor to America from a fictitious European nation called Karkozhia
Catherine Zeta Jones as Amelia Warren, a flight attendant who befriends Navorski
Stanley Tucci as Frank Dixon, the chief of airport security
Chi McBride as Joe Mulroy, the baggage handler
Diego Luna as Enrique Cruz, the food service employee
Barry Shabaka Henley as Ray Thurman, Dixon's chief officer
Kumar Pallana as Gupta Rajan, a janitor within the terminal from India
Zoe Saldana as Officer Torres, the Visa officer
Eddie Jones as Salchak
Michael Nouri as Max

MPAA Rating: PG-13 Brief language and drug references

Synopsis of Film: Viktor Navorski is visiting America to fulfill a promise he has made to his deceased father. Upon arriving in at the JFK airport from the small European nation of Karkozhia, Viktor Navorski (Tom Hank) discovers that he is a man without a country. Karkozhia is in the midst of a military coup which has negated his passport and his eligibility to be issued a visa. He is ordered by Frank Dixon (Stanley Tucci), head of airport security, he must remain at the airport terminal until the political conflict in his home nation is resolved. Snarled in airport protocols, Navorski initially spends a night in the International Lounge, which stretches from days to months. Adding to the problems faced by Navorski is the rigid attitude of the airport's security chief, Frank Dixon. At first Dixon tries to trick Navorski into leaving the terminal, then virtually imprisons him in the terminal's lounge. Navorski survives by returning baggage carts for their quarter deposit and eventually securing an under-the-table job on an airport construction crew.

Through his charm and genuinely sincere personality, Navorski builds a network of friends who help him adapt to his new environment. Among them are an attractive flight attendant, Amelia Warren (Catherine Zeta-Jones), a baggage handler (Chi McBride), a food service coordinator (Diego Luna), and janitor (Kumar Pallana) who become his steadfast allies. Viktor also befriends a number of others people who work in the terminal shops and work crews.

Finally, the political mayhem in Karkozhia is resolved and Viktor can enter New York City to fulfill his initial reason for being there. To do so, he must rely on the aid of his associates who make grave sacrifices in his behalf.

The Terminal is an excellent example of networking, socialization, resocialization, and human adaptation. Although the storyline takes place almost exclusively within the confines of the airport, the excellent acting and human interest that unfolds will maintain the viewer's interest.

Exercises and Questions

1. What examples of ethnocentrism did Frank Dixon, the chief of airport security, display toward Viktor Navorski when he arrived in New York?
2. How did Viktor's relationship with the baggage handler, food service coordinator, visa officer, and other airport employees evolve from a secondary to primary group?
3. Why does Frank Dixon consider Navorski as being a member of an out-group?
4. It is generally accepted as group size increases, the level of intimacy decreases. How is this basic premise countered by the events in the film?
5. How did Navorski's capabilities change as the size of his social group increased? Why?
6. Why style of leadership does Dixon rely upon in his position of airport security chief? Compare his style to the style of leadership that Viktor demonstrates?
7. How does the airport security office qualify as a bureaucracy? Is the bureaucracy the best form of organization for it to take? Why or why not?

Cast Away (2000)

Major Application: Society and Social Groups

Secondary Applications: Culture, Socialization and Life the Course, Human Ecology and Environment, Technology and Social Change

Major Characters: Tom Hanks as Chuck Noland, a supervisor for Federal Express
Helen Hunt as Kelly Fears, Noland's fiancée
The Volleyball as Wilson, Noland's closest friend while marooned
Nick Searcy as Stan, Chuck's friend and co-worker
Jennifer Lewis as Becca Twig
Geoffrey Blake as Maynard Graham
Peter von Berg as Yuri
Chris North as Jerry Lovett, Kelly's husband

MPAA Rating: PG-13

Intense action sequences and some disturbing images

Synopsis of Film: Chuck Noland (Tom Hanks) is a dedicated systems engineer for Federal Express. His work takes him around the world, his career is promising, and he is about to become engaged to his steady girlfriend, Kelly Frears (Helen Hunt). But fate interrupts Noland's career as well as his relationship to Frears as the cargo plane in which he is riding crashes into the Pacific Ocean. Washed ashore as the only survivor, Noland is initially fearful, inept, and at the mercy of the elements. He makes a slow, but steady transformation to being self confident and effective. Although the island is uninhabited, it provides all the necessities for human survival. Noland's adjustment is assisted by cargo that eventually washes ashore from the crashed plane. Among the retrieved packages is one containing a volleyball manufactured by the Wilson Sporting Goods company. After painting a face on "Wilson", the volleyball takes on a personification of its own, becoming Noland's closest friend and conscience.

Although Noland appears to master his environment as a modern day Robinson Crusoe, he still longs for human companionship. In a "do or die" effort, he builds a raft and together with Wilson, sets out to find an inhabited island or be rescued at sea. Upon returning to the United States, Noland must make a new adjustment to the bustling and hectic demands of the business world. He is also confronted with facing his former fiancée who is now happily married and raising a family.

Exercises and Questions

1. How is Noland's social life different in his work in Russia, when he returns to Memphis, and when he is stranded on the tropical island?
2. How does Noland use material culture to avoid environmental determinism? If He did not have the material goods he brought with him to the island and the ones that washed ashore from the crashed plane, how would his life on the island been different?
3. If you were confronted with a similar situation as Noland who would you use for a reference group in an effort to survive? What would be your first priorities for survival?
4. Identify all the aspects of being marooned that contribute to Noland's cultural shock. How does he undergo a different cultural shock some four years later when he returns to Memphis?
5. Have you ever had the equivalent to a "Wilson" on which you depended for companionship and support? Explain.
6. How does having someone to "discuss" issues with, even an inanimate object such as "Wilson", assist you in making decisions and reaching conclusions? Why are "real people" better at providing such assistance?
7. How does the film illustrate Durkheim's concept of the social imperative?

8. Why does Noland appear to be sad as he leaves the island on his improved raft?
9. Why does Noland experience a great sense of loss when the volleyball becomes dislodged and floats out to sea, beyond Noland's ability to retrieve it?
10. What is the significance of Chuck returning the watch to Kelly at the end of the film?
11. At the end of the film, Noland said he had power over nothing while on the island. How was this an erroneous, yet accurate, statement to make in retrospect?
12. How does the intersection where Noland is looking for directions at the end of the film illustrate the crossroads in his life? Have you ever had an experience that you could call the crossroads in your life?

Other Films to Consider

Quigley Down Under (1990). Matthew Quigley (Tom Selleck) is a world-class marksman who travels from Wyoming to Australia to take on a job of shooting prairie dogs for a rich land baron (Alan Rickman)...so he thinks. Set in the late 1800's, Quigley soon parts ways with his new boss and becomes dependent on a foraging band of aborigines. Several types of societies clash in conflict. What types of societies are illustrated in the film? How are the group of ranchers headed by Marston (Alan Rickman) and the local native tribes qualified as being an example on an in-group/out-group relationship? Rated PG-13.

Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves (1991). The feudal period is well depicted in this re-make of the famous tale. Kevin Costner leads his band of merry men in their quest to improve the standard of society as he robs from the rich, gives to the poor, and wins the heart of the damsel in distress. What type of leadership styles are illustrated by Robin and the Sheriff? Why is each style effective in the particular social setting in which it is employed? Rated PG-13.

Teen Wolf (1985). Scott Howard is an "average" teenager who wishes he could be more than average. In another, "be careful what you wish for" plot, the film illustrates the impact of peer groups, symbolic interactionism, status, roles, and the responsibilities that come with success. Identify the different statuses Scott occupies and the accompanying roles he must play. How does Scott's master status change with each separate setting he joins? What are Scott Howard's support systems before he discovers "the wolf"? How do these change after he realizes he can control his transformation to the wolf? Listen to the words of the song at the end of the movie and comment on their content. Rated PG.

The Longest Yard (1974). On the street, Paul Crew (Burt Reynolds) was a star NFL quarterback admired by men and desired by women. In the penitentiary he's just another convict until the warden (Eddie Albert) decides his guards' football team needs a "tune-up" game at which time Crew is pressed into service to deliver an inmate team on a silver platter. How do the inmates qualify as being in an in-group/out-group relationship among themselves? W do they qualify as

being in an in-group/out-group relationship with the guards? What types of leadership are demonstrated by the Warden and Paul Crew? Would any other type of leadership style be effective in these respective settings? Why or why not? In respect to the authority within the prison, determine the authority de jure and authority de facto within the staff and within the inmate ranks. What are the group dynamics of the prison environment? Rated R.

Hoffa (1992). Jack Nicholson plays Jimmy Hoffa and Danny DiVito plays his right hand man in this convincing re-enactment of the life and presumed death of one of America's most well known labor leaders. The development of the Teamsters and its tremendous influence are illustrated very well, as is a plausible account of Hoffa's demise. How did Jimmy Hoffa transform his efforts to unite his fellow truck workers from being just a disorganized group of rabble-rousers to one of the most powerful organizations in the world? What are some of the difficulties a small group must encounter when taking on the bureaucracy? Why did the Teamsters become part of the criminal element? Rated R .

Witness (1985). Harrison Ford plays a big city detective and Kelly McGillis an attractive young Amish woman in this detective tale set in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Ford seeks refuge at an Amish farm after being seriously injured by the criminals he is pursuing. As he convalesces he blends into the Amish community as one of its members. Blending in, however, is more difficult than either Ford or McGillis realize as their separate cultural values present numerous adjustment difficulties. Which types of societies are depicted in the film. How is the organic society (the world John Bach lives in) different, yet similar to the mechanical society (the world Rachel Lapp lives in)? Discuss the division of labor that exists in each society. Rated R.

Chapter Five

Socialization and Life Course

Scent of a Woman (1992)

Major Application: Socialization and the Life Course

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Culture, Deviance and Social Control, Age and Society

Major Characters: Al Pacino as Col. Frank Slade (U.S. Army Retired), a man in the twilight of his life, retired from the military, blind, and living with his daughter's family
Chris O'Donnell as Charlie Simms, a middle class student attending the exclusive Bard School on a merit scholarship who is to attend to Col. Slade on Thanksgiving weekend while the daughter and her family get away
James Rebhorn as Headmaster Trask, the administrator in charge of the Bard School.
Gene Canfield as Manny, the limo driver
Philip S. Hoffman as George Willis Jr., the eye witness to the prank around which the story unfolds
Nicholas Sader as Harry Havenmeyer, one of the three pranksters
Todd Louiso as Trent Potter, the second prankster
Matt Smith as Jimmy Jamison, the third prankster

MPAA Rating: PG-13 Language, Suggested Sexuality, Violence

Synopsis of Film: Charlie Simms (Chris O'Donnell) is a student from a middle class family in Oregon attending the exclusive Bard School located in New England. As Thanksgiving weekend approaches, Charlie is seeking a way to earn the money to pay for his air fare to fly home for Christmas. He comes across an ad for someone to attend to a retired Army colonel (Al Pacino) for the Thanksgiving weekend. Col. Frank Slade is far from congenial as he interviews the mild mannered Simms for the position. Although he turns the job offer down when offered it by the daughter of Slade, she begs him to accept because he was the only person to apply and she and her family desperately need a weekend away from Dad.

The day before the Thanksgiving recess at Bard begins, Harry Havenmeyer, a student prankster, orchestrate a gag to humiliate Bard's Headmaster Trask (James Rebhorn). The incident is witnessed by George Willis Jr. and Simms as they are leaving the school's library. Trask discovers that Willis and Simms may be able to identify the culprits and places them in a position to either "squeal" on their classmates or face disciplinary action. The final decision will be made when classes resume after the Thanksgiving recess.

As Charlie takes on the responsibility of attending to Colonel Slade he is placed in another dilemma. Rather than sitting at home over the holiday weekend, the Colonel is planning one last

fling in New York City before taking his own life. Charlie accompanies Slade to the Big Apple for a series of escapades.

In the dramatic conclusion to the weekend's activities, Slade returns home with Simms and then comes to his aid as Headmaster Trask is about to place the onus of responsibility on Simms for the pre-Thanksgiving incident.

Pacino's role as Colonel Frank Slade won him the academy award for best actor.

Questions and Exercises

1. How many examples of social class in American society are illustrated in the movie and by which characters?
2. How is the material culture of Charlie the same, as well as different, from that of George, Harry, Trent, and Jimmy? How are their non-material cultures different?
3. Resocialization is defined as the process of learning new values, attitudes, and behaviors. Desocialization is the unlearning of previously held values, attitudes, and behaviors. Both events may be associated with an unexpected, negative change in status. How does the experience of Colonel Frank Slade (Al Pacino) illustrate the qualities of both desocialization and resocialization?
4. How does Colonel Slade compensate for his blindness?
5. In this story, a man in the prime of his career (Slade) is forced to rethink and readjust to his environment due to his unexpected blindness. What other physical changes in a person's life would also necessitate desocialization as well as resocialization?
6. In the event you were suddenly faced with the prospect of being blind, how would your life change? How would your situation compare to that of Colonel Slade's?
7. Why does Colonel Slade have a difficult time relating to his brother, nephew, and other family members at the Thanksgiving dinner?
8. How does the reason for his blindness, contribute to Colonel Slade's abrasive style? What may explain Randy's (Slade's nephew) cynicism towards his uncles?
9. A significant emotional event is an incident that causes us to defend or change our behavior. What were the significant emotional events in Colonel Slade's life and how what was their aftermath?
10. Analyze Trask's speech before the student body at the disciplinary hearing and Colonel Slade's response to it. What factors need to be considered in each speech in reference to Trask's motive and that of Slade's?

For Richer or Poorer (1998)

Major Application: Socialization and the Life Course

Secondary Applications: Culture, Social Stratification, Society and Social Groups, Family and Society

Major Characters: Tim Allen as Brad Sexton and Jacob Yoder
Kirstie Alley as Caroline Sexton and Emma Yoder
Jay O. Sanders as Samuel Yoder
Michael Lerner as Phil Kleinman
Wayne Knight as Bob Lachman
Larry Miller as Inspector Derek Lester
Miquel A. Nunez Jr. as Frank Hall, IRS Agent
Megan Cavanagh as Levinia Yoder
Carrie Preston as Rebecca Yoder

MPAA Rating: PG-13 Mild Language, some sexual innuendo

Synopsis of Film: Brad Sexton (Tim Allen) and his wife Caroline (Kirstie Alley) are two upper class cosmopolites living the “good life” in New York City. They enjoy the best neighborhoods, run a Wall Street business, and are surrounded by friends and acquaintances who admire them for the high class success and business savvy. But much of their success is smoke and mirrors. Like many other “successful” business people of the 90s, they are heavily in debt. Their marriage is on the rocks and they find themselves living life as a charade. Although keenly aware of these problems, what they do not know is that their crooked accountant has ripped them off and has left them owing the IRS a hefty sum of three million dollars. Hunted down like public enemy number one by over zealous revenue agents, the Sextons seek solace in the quiet Amish community of Intercourse, Pennsylvania. Posing as relatives of Samuel and Lavinia Yoder (who they have never met), the Sextons find themselves faced with unlearning life as they knew it so they can blend into the Amish community. Initially designed to only be a temporary sanctuary, the Sextons go through a resocialization process that changes their lives.

The differences in the Amish and New York City culture provide a humorous comparison as does the adaptation the Sextons make to their new way of life.

Exercises and Questions

1. Describe the desocialization process experienced by Brad and Caroline as they flee New York City.
2. Describe the resocialization process experienced by Brad and Caroline. Although they initially saw the resocialization process as a negative experience, how and why did their opinion about it change?

3. If you just won the 100 million dollar lotto, how would life as you now know it change? What do you expect would be a part of your resocialization process to your new found wealth and fame?
4. When Jacob (Tim Allen as the Amish relative) and Samuel Yoder (Jay o. Sanders) have the discussion at the bridge where Jacob is trying to admit to his deception and Samuel is discussing marriage, what does Samuel say about marriage? Why there is so little separation and divorce in the Amish community?
5. How were the Amish community, its structure, activities, and people differ from the life in New York City from which Brad and Carol “escaped”? What terms would Durkheim use to characterize New York City and the Amish community?
6. Compare and contrast the material and non-material culture the Sextons left in New York City to the material and non-material culture they are experiencing as members of the Amish community.
7. How does being “Amish” change Brad and Carol’s personalities and perspectives on life and other people?
8. How does the Amish way of life emphasize the importance of primary groups? How does the Amish concept of primary and secondary groups compare to primary and secondary groups in the city life Brad and Caroline left behind?
9. Notice that Samuel Yoder uses the term “English” to refer to all non-Amish. What significance is this in how the Amish define primary and secondary groups and in-groups and out-groups?
10. Does the experience of Brad and Carol support the argument that behavior is the result of nature or nurture? What impact did the influence of others and the environment have on Brad and Carol’s behavior?
11. How are Durkheim’s concepts of the social imperative, social integration, and social solidarity demonstrated in each way of life experienced by Brad and Carol, as city dwellers and as members of the Amish community?

Other Films to Consider

An Innocent Man (1989) Jimmie Rainwood (Tom Selleck) had it all.....a great job, a loving wife, and a beautiful home in the suburbs. But all of this is swept away as Rainwood is wrongfully accused and convicted of a major felony. He is thrust into the quagmire of the penitentiary where his world turns upside down and inside out. This new environment requires Rainwood to learn an entirely new set of standards, values, and behavior if he is to survive. This is a vivid tale of counterculture and resocialization. In *An Innocent Man*, what are the agents of socialization faced by Jimmie Rainwood as he passes from the life of a private law abiding

citizen to that of a convicted drug dealer entering a maximum-security penitentiary? How does his first period of socialization impact upon his need for resocialization? Once released from prison, what are some of the lingering effects of having been “resocialized” that Rainwood carries with him back to his old suburban neighborhood? Rated R.

Analyze This (1999). This film stars Robert DeNiro as a powerful mob leader and Billy Crystal as a successful psychotherapist. Each has their distinctive views on moral development, problem solving, and the concept of “family”. Using a humorous twist, the story permits the viewer to analyze Paul Vitti (DeNiro), the gangster, from a number of perspectives. Provide an analysis of Paul Vitti’s character. Using readings from the text and insight gained from Ben Sobel’s (Billy Crystal’s) assessment, develop a basis for what ails the gangster and why. How are the agents of socialization for Vitti different from those of Sobel and other non-organized crime leaders? Rated R.

Big (1988). Be careful what you wish for! At a carnival, 12-year old Josh Baskin (Tom Hanks) wishes he was big, only to discover the next morning that he is! Transformed into a 30-year old body but maintaining his 12-year old mind poses many problems Josh never expected. After viewing the film, explain how aging is both a biological and socialization process with each being equally important. Explain how Josh’s material and non-material cultures are abruptly changed which causes his own personal version of culture shock. Rated PG.

Forrest Gump (1994). “Run Forrest, Run!” This academy award winning film traces the life of a peculiar young man in a single-parent home in the South. As naïve as he is gifted, Forrest successfully overcomes adversity in many forms including physical and mental challenges, cultural differences, and vocational setbacks. Along the way he proves that nice guys can finish much better than last and there are values and virtues worth preserving. Identify each agent of socialization that touches Forrest, noting its short term and long term affects. Rated PG-13.

Nell (1994). This film, starring Jodi Foster, offers an excellent perspective on feral childhood. Much more believable than the classic Tarzan plot of a child being raised by apes, a doctor discovers a feral child from the backwoods of North Carolina who has chronologically progressed to early adulthood. The doctor then tries to introduce the young lady to “normal society”. Compare and contrast the content of *Nell* with any of the Tarzan films. Is the Tarzan scenario believable? Defend your answer. Rated PG-13.

Trading Places (1983) This classic film depicts an argument between two wealthy stockbrokers taken to extremes on the merits of the nature versus nurture controversy. A preppie “have” (Dan Aykroyd) is unknowingly and deceitfully exchanged with a “have-not” (Eddie Murphy). A supportive group of friends and associates help the unknowing subjects of the study take revenge on their experimenters. After viewing *Trading Places*, identify all the aspects of the nature versus nurture argument to the two main characters (Dan Aykroyd and Eddie Murphy). How valid were the assumptions made by the stockbroker brothers as they pertain to each argument. Based on the content of the film and the readings in the textbook, choose a position of which is the most influential aspect of human development. Rated R.

Chapter Six Deviance and Social Control

Goodfellas (1990)

Major Application: Deviance and Social Control

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Culture, Society and Social Group, Socialization and the Life Course, Economic Systems, Collective Behavior and Social Change.

Major Characters: Robert DeNiro as Jimmy Conway
Ray Liotta as Henry Hill
Joe Pesci as Tommy DeVito
Lorraine Bracco as Karen Hill, Henry's wife
Paul Sorvino as Paul Cicero, head of the crime family
Frank Sivero as Frankie Carbone, a major player in the Cicero crime family
Chuck Low as Morris "Morrie" Kessler, the toupee salesman and member of Jimmy's crew during the Lufthansa heist
Frank DiLeo as Tutti Cicero, Paul's brother who ran most of the family's business
Gina Mastrogiacomo as Janet Rossi, Henry's mistress

MPAA Rating: R Harsh language, vulgarity, racial and ethnic slurs, violence (The language is especially foul and should be considered prior to assigning the film.)

Synopsis of Film: Young Henry Hill always wanted to be a gangster. And he got his wish. In this film told in an old world tradition, Henry Hill (Ray Liotta) narrates what transpired in his neighborhood from the time he was a youngster through adulthood. He provides commentary on all the main characters in the film and the activities in which they engage.

The benefits of being a member of organized crime are illustrated in the first part of the film with only innuendo and brief examples of their cost. As the film progresses, the involvement in organized crime by the major characters becomes more intense with a corresponding accountability of the toll it takes on their personal and family life. The romanticism and naiveté of being wiseguys shifts to the harsh realities of its cost. Wiseguys turn on each other for some of the most trivial of reasons, their families are sacrificed, and lives are destroyed.

Goodfellas is a prime example of how deviance can be considered an acceptable and even desired way of life. But in the process of providing the rise and fall of the major characters in the story, it also provides a message why this particular way of life violates the basic norms and values of society and the toll it takes on human life and dignity.

Exercises and Questions

1. In the opening of the film, Henry Hill says, “As far back as I can remember, I’ve always wanted to be a gangster...to me, being a gangster was better than being the President of the United States.” Examine this statement from the sociological perspectives of structural functionalism, conflict, and symbolic interactionism.
2. What theory of deviance would best explain the domestic violence displayed by Henry’s father after he discovered Henry had quit school? Why?
3. What are the major points of the non-material culture of the mob as displayed in the early part of the film? What was the single greatest value?
4. Throughout the film, identify the aspects of the material culture of the members of the mob that were different from the material culture of the average New Yorker?
5. What theory of deviance best explains the collective behavior of the gang members?
6. Why is Jimmy Conway (Robert De Niro) considered as being the wiseguy’s wiseguy or the epitome of what a wiseguy (gangster) should be?
7. How does ethnocentrism enter into the description of Italians and Jews made by Tommy (Joe Pesci) when talking about the girls? How does this carry into the evening when Henry (Ray Liotta) first meets Karen’s parents?
8. Why is Karen so naïve about Henry’s financial success and the respect he receives from everyone everywhere he takes her? Why does she consider Henry’s work as “enterprising” and “normal” and that none of it seemed like crime? Can you make a comparison of this rationalization to other forms of deviance? Based on Sykes and Matza’s techniques of neutralization, how do members of the mob maintain a positive self image?
9. How do the mob families qualify as a subculture? What examples are given in the film to support this? Why was it important for the families to do everything together including birthday parties and even their vacations? What legitimate occupations can you identify as being subcultures for some of the same reasons?
10. Identify the various forms of deviance portrayed by the actors in the film and classify each as being either deviance from the normative or social reaction perspective.
11. Discuss how social bond plays an important role in maintaining the sanctity of the crime family and how the family changed when the bond began to diminish. Specifically focus on Hirschi’s four elements that contribute to social bond: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief.

12. Assess why traditional organized crime families based on European heritage (especially Italian based families) are on the decline while gangs based on Asian heritage and the Russian Mafiya are on the rise.

Pulp Fiction (1994)

Major Application: Deviance and Social Control

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Society and Social Groups, Socialization and Life the Course, Social Stratification, Race and Ethnicity

Major Characters: Tim Roth as Pumpkin (Ringo), a street punk and small time hood
Amanda Plummer as Honey Bunny (Yolanda), Pumpkin's girlfriend
John Travolta as Vincent Vega, a wiseguy employed by crime kingpin
Marsellus Wallace who has just returned from Europe
Samuel L. Jackson as Jules Winnfield, Vega's partner and another of
Wallace's hired thugs
Bruce Willis as Butch Coolidge, a prize fighter who is recruited by
Wallace to throw a fight
Ving Rhames as Marsellus Wallace, the local crime baron
Paul Calderone as Paul
Bronagh Gallagher as Trudi
Rosanna Arquette as Jody
Eric Stoltz as Lance
Uma Thurman as Mia Wallace, Marsellus' wife

MPAA Rating: R Strong graphic violence, drug use, pervasive strong language, some sexuality

Synopsis of Film: The film is a series of short stories, all interrelated but told out of sequence. Although difficult to follow, it is overabundant in illustrating examples of deviance including marijuana use, drug sales, heroin overdose, sodomy, homicide, and street crime, as well as other acts that would be considered as a violation of social norms.

The film begins as two amateur stick-up artists, Pumpkin (Tim Roth) and Honey Bunny (Amanda Plummer) spontaneously decide to rob a restaurant. In its shifting, but interrelated scenes, the storyline then introduces Vincent Vega (John Travolta) and Jules Winnfield (Samuel L. Jackson) as two hit men in the employ of notorious crime boss Marsellus Wallace (Ving Rhames). Vega and Winnfield are responsible for retrieving a valuable briefcase for Wallace and then holding on to it as Pumpkin tries to take it from Winnfield during the restaurant robbery.

Other subplots develop as Butch Coolidge (Bruce Willis) is recruited by Marsellus Wallace to throw a championship fight. But contrary to their deal, Coolidge beats his opponent...he actually kills him in the ring...and then flees with his girlfriend to live off his winnings and to escape Wallace.

An unlikely scenario of events brings Wallace and Coolidge together and after trying to kill each other and nearly succeeding, they develop an uneasy alliance when Coolidge saves Wallace from a masochistic sheriff who takes both Wallace and Coolidge into custody.

Another subplot involves Vega taking Mia Wallace (Uma Thurman) out for an evening at the request of Marsellus. During their dinner and dancing chemistry develops that appears to be leading to an intimate ending for the evening. Instead, Mia nearly dies when she discovers Vega's high octane heroin and snorts a few lines of it, mistaking it for cocaine.

For viewers who appreciate a film with an overabundance of sexual innuendo, violence, harsh language, and numerous plots *Pulp Fiction* is a good choice. Some viewers find the sequence of the subplots being out of order as an added enticement trying to place them in proper order, other find it annoying.

Exercises and Questions

1. Discuss the differences in American and European culture based on the conversation that Vega (John Travolta) has with Winnfield (Samuel L. Jackson) as they drive to the job they have at the beginning of the film. In view of what Vega says, would drug use in Holland be considered deviance? Why or why not?
2. How does Honey Bunny (Amanda Plummer) use her femininity to induce Pumpkin (Tim Roth) to rob the restaurant? How does she then use her femininity in an effort to save Pumpkin from being shot by Winnfield?
3. How does the behavior of Butch Coolidge (Bruce Willis) qualify as being elite deviance?
4. Make a list of each major character in the film (Vega, Winnfield, Marsellus Wallace, Mia Wallace, Coolidge, Pumpkin, Honey Bunny, Paul, Jody, and Trudi) and then list next to each the deviance in which they engage. After each incidence of deviance, indicate if the deviance would be classified as deviance from a normative approach or a societal reactive approach adding a note to justify your classification.
5. Choose **one** theory of deviance that would collectively best explain the deviant behavior of the major characters. Although there are varying forms of deviance, try to isolate a single theory that would best apply to the group.
6. List each of the major characters identified in question number four and match a theory of deviance to each character that best explains their deviant behavior. Although you have a limited amount of background information on each character, select the theory that you feel is best and add a note after your selection to justify why the specific theory was chosen.
7. What sanctions are the result of the deviant behavior of each character identified in question number four? Do these sanctions cause the characters to change their behavior? Classify each sanction identified as being either formal or informal, defacto or dejure.

8. Durkheim's classic work, *The Normal and the Pathological* demonstrates the necessity of society to have members who engage in deviant behaviors. By doing so, those of us who are "normal" have a standard by which we can compare our own behavior. Even those of us who violate norms can point to some of the characters in the film and justify our own shady behavior as not being nearly as severe, thus establishing a sense of righteousness. Based on your experience on the college campus, identify behaviors in which college students engage that are similar, but not as serious, as the behavior in which the major characters engage.

Other Films to Consider

American History X (1998). This is a hard-hitting drama of a young man seduced into a white supremacy movement in Venice, California. He goes to prison after committing a heinous crime where he re-thinks and modifies his racist ideology. Upon returning to the street, he embarks on a personal crusade to save his younger brother from the same life of hatred and discrimination. Describe how Derek Vinyard (Edward Norton) undergoes desocialization and resocialization while serving his prison sentence. Could this experience occur anywhere else other than in a total institution? This film is frightening powerful, believable, and intense. It may not be suitable for all audiences. Rated R.

American Me (1992). This sobering film is a powerful and stunning examination of a Latino crime lord set against a backdrop of prejudice and hopelessness. Edward James Olmos stars as Santana, a youth from the streets of East Los Angeles who becomes the leader of the Mexican Mafia behind the gates of Folsom Prison. Santana rules the prison with an iron fist in a vicious cycle of violence. After viewing *American Me*, consider the process by which the main characters become involved in deviant and criminal behavior. Is this behavior the product of learning, operant conditioning, a lack of containment, or failure of self-control? Which theory do you think best accounts for the characters' thought processes and actions? This film is explosive and vivid and not suggested for everyone. Rated R.

Donnie Brasco (1997). Donnie Brasco was the alias used by Joe Pistone, the most successful undercover agent to infiltrate the New York mob. As Donnie Brasco, this law officer became one of the mob's most trusted "wise guys." This film illustrates the values and beliefs held by members of organized crime and how they remarkably differ from those of the mainstream culture. After viewing of *Donnie Brasco*, consider the process by which Joseph Pistone becomes involved in deviant and criminal behavior in order to win the confidence of the mob. What do you think the rational limits of behavior should be for undercover law enforcement officers, regardless of their assignment? Should law enforcement officers be permitted to break the law to arrest high profile criminals such as members of organized crime? Should the government be permitted to violate individual civil rights without due process in the name of national security and to protect the country from terrorism? Explain your position. Rated R.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975). This film is a four-star classic starring Jack Nicholson, Danny DiVito, and Christopher Lloyd as they were establishing themselves as Hollywood icons. In one respect the story is quite disturbing as it portrays a sane convict who is

admitted to a mental ward as punishment for being an incorrigible troublemaker. On the other hand, it symbolizes the triumph of a person with no prior medical training who inspires his fellow patients to assert themselves. A frustrated and strong-willed head nurse played by Louise Fletcher becomes Nicholson's personal nemesis when she realizes she has lost control of her ward. The film won all five top Oscars in 1975. Make a list of each major character in the film and identify the deviant behavior they exhibit. What are the qualities of the hospital that qualifies it for being a total institution? Develop a recreational program for the patient population that would have therapeutic benefits. Rated R.

The Green Mile (1999). An elderly man recalls the incident that changed his life in 1935 when he supervised death row at a Louisiana state prison, and encountered a gentle black behemoth with an unusual gift. This is a well-made film with serious moments. The execution scenes can be rather traumatic, however, being as convincingly real as possible. The norms of behavior among the condemned and those who watch over them are well illustrated. Discuss whether the death penalty, as it is used in the United States, has the necessary qualities to be an effective deterrent to crime. Establish a position in favor or against the death penalty based on your preferred grounds and then use specific examples from the film to support that position as well as evidence from other sources of your choosing. Rated R.

Chapter Seven

Social Stratification

***Titanic* (1997)**

Major Applications: Social Stratification

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Research Methods, Culture, Family and Society, Society and Social Groups, Socialization and the Life Course, Family and Society, Collective Behavior and Social Change, Technology and Social Change

Major Characters: Leonardo DiCaprio as Jack Dawson
Kate Winslet as Rose DeWitt Bukater
Billy Zane as Cal Hockley
Kathy Bates as Molly Brown
Frances Fisher as Ruth DeWitt Bukater
Bernard Hill as Captain E. J. Smith
Bill Paxton as Brock Lovett

MPAA Rating: PG-13 Mild Language, brief nudity, suggestive themes

Synopsis of Film: Perhaps the most well known true-life disaster in history, the story of the Titanic has been the focus of controversy since she sank to the bottom of the North Atlantic in 1912. Nominated for fourteen academy awards and winner of eleven, James Cameron directed this classic release that grossed over 600 million dollars at the box office in 38 weeks. The sociological interest in this disaster addresses the Titanic's passengers and crew, their pride in being a part of the ship's maiden voyage and their heroism during its last hours afloat. To illustrate what transpired on the ship's maiden voyage, Cameron introduces Jack Dawson (Leonardo DiCaprio) and Rose Dewitt Bukater (Kate Winslet).

Exercises and Questions

1. Describe the differences in accommodations and baggage by the passengers assigned to the upper decks including Rose DeWitt Bukater (Kate Winslet) and her mother, Cal Hockley (Billy Zane), Molly Brown (Kathy Bates), and the others to the accommodations and baggage by the passengers assigned to the lower decks that included Jack Dawson (Leonardo DiCaprio) and the other Europeans immigrating to the United States.
2. Although she is traveling in the first-class cabins, Rose is at odds with the behavior and value system of those around her. Why?
3. When Kate introduces Jack to her mother, she compares the way in which her mother looked at Jack as though he were "a dangerous insect who must be squashed quickly." Why was this an accurate perception?

4. Molly Brown (Kathy Bates) is from the upper class but is unaccepted by the other wealthy women because she is from “new money.” What does this mean? It also appears she has an appreciation for Jack that many of her contemporaries lack. Why?
5. How does Jack experience culture shock as he meets Rose, her mother, and fiancé for dinner in the upper deck ballroom after he rescues her?
6. After dinner on the upper deck, Jack takes Rose to “a real party” on the lower deck. Compare and contrast the two events. Why does the culture of the people on the upper deck qualify as high culture? Would the culture expressed by Jack and his associates below deck qualify more as folk culture or popular culture? Why?
7. There are actually only two major social classes among the passengers. What are they and how would Karl Marx comment on the disbursement? If there were a more diverse group of people based on class, would it be more difficult to distinguish between the classes? Why?
8. Compare and contrast the material and non-material culture of the two distinct classes of passengers.
9. At one time, the upper classes distinguished themselves from other classes by traveling in first class accommodations, whether it be by sea, rail, or air. How has this method of distinguishing social class changed over the past twenty or thirty years?
10. One of the controversies in the shortage of health care is the potential need to ration health care based on the importance of the individual needing it and the ability to pay. How does this compare to the manner in which life boats were assigned and the manner in which the people were saved?

Other Films to Consider

For Richer or Poorer (1997). Tim Allen and Kirstie Alley play crass, filthy-rich New Yorkers whose marriage is on the rocks. Forced to take their lives on the lam when accused of tax fraud, the couple hides out on an Amish farm in Pennsylvania pretending to be the cousins of the Amish family who takes them in. Spoiled and lazy, they are forced to do hard, honest work and actually come to like it. How are the rich and the poor stereotyped in this film? Discuss social mobility and how Brad and Caroline were transformed in their behaviors and attitudes as their class standings changed. Rated PG-13.

Gone With the Wind (1939). Perhaps the most famous movie of all time, *Gone With the Wind* presents a number of cultures in conflict...political, economic, social, and racial. An examination of this classic epic helps the viewer gain insight into understanding the social and political differences that exist today in these same areas. After viewing *Gone With the Wind*, describe the

consequences of class. How does Rhett Butler overcome adversity without actually being wealthy? What are some of the qualities displayed by the characters in the film that transcend the power and prestige of wealth? You may use other films to answer this last question. Not Rated.

Salaam Bombay! (1988). This Indian-British produced film is a disturbing account of a young country boy, Syed. Along with other abandoned street children like him, he literally works for pennies doing almost anything to survive...delivering teas, serving at weddings, and even dealing drugs. The horror of the street is surpassed by the conditions within the juvenile institution for delinquents (The Chiller Room) where many of the children are eventually sent. Based on your viewing of *Salaam Bombay!*, discuss the relationship between poverty and homelessness among the street children of Bombay. How do the children end up in the streets? Where are their parents? Describe the environment of “The Chiller Room” where orphaned and homeless children are sent. Is this institution preferable to the children living on the street?

The Beverly Hillbillies (1993). The big screen rehash of the corny 1960’s TV series with the backwoods Clampett clan striking oil and moving to Beverly Hills. Although this movie version was rated less favorably than the small screen counterpart, it still provides a clash of cultures when the happy but poor Clampetts are transformed to the rich but confused residents of Beverly Hills. Discuss the cultural shock the Clampetts experience when they are transformed from hill people to rich socialites. How does their behavior and personal attitudes change compared to the changes experienced by Brad and Caroline in *For Richer or Poorer*. Rated PG.

The Grapes of Wrath (1940). This old classic is unmatched in depicting the poverty experienced by migrants seeking to escape the Oklahoma Dust Bowl of the Depression era. Families travel across country with all they own in hopes of finding a better life in California where they only encounter prejudice and violence. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, the migrants have lost almost everything they own and are truly disadvantaged. How is their plight similar and different than that of people born into poverty in the inner city and other environments? Not Rated.

Remember the Titans (2000). An African American (Denzel Washington) is chosen to replace a highly respected white coach (Will Patton) when two segregated schools merge in the early 1970’s. Initially each coach is somewhat distrustful of the other but each recognizes and accepts the need to break down the racial barriers that exist between them as well as between their players. Through teamwork and sacrifice, the team and its coaches form a strong bond that transcends racial differences. Based on a true story, Washington and Patton each contribute a stellar performance. Apart from race, what is the basis for stratification within the community? Explain how the scenario that faces the community can be explained from each of the sociological perspectives...how it is an example of functionalism, of the symbolic interactionist perspective, and the conflict perspective. Rated PG.

Chapter Eight Race and Ethnicity

Men of Honor (2000)

Major Application: Race and Ethnicity

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Culture, Social Stratification. Technology and Social Change

Major Characters: Robert DeNiro as Master Chief Billy Sunday
Cuba Gooding Jr. as Naval Seaman Carl M. Brashear
Charlize Theron as Mrs. Gwen Sunday
Hal Holbrook as “Mr. Pappy”, commander of the Bayonne, New Jersey
U.S. Navy Diving School
Michael Rapaport as Seaman Snowhill, fellow student diver
David Conrad as Captain Hanks, Navy personnel officer
Powers Booth as Captain Pullman, commander of the USS Hoist
Holt McCallany as Petty Officer Rourke, fellow student diver

MPAA Rating: R Harsh language, vulgarity, racial slurs

Synopsis of Film: Prior to 1948 the American military was a segregated social institution. African Americans were seldom assigned to combat units. Instead, they were delegated to serving in support units such as supply, maintenance, food service, and transportation. Although there were a few exceptions to this policy, such as the Tuskegee Airmen, African American combat units were viewed by most white soldiers with suspicion and rejection. It wasn’t until President Harry S. Truman signed an executive order integrating the military that African Americans even became eligible for most of the military specialties offered to white service men and women. Even then, the policy was not universally accepted and a form of defacto segregation continued long after de jure segregation was abolished.

Men of Honor is the true story of Carl M. Brashear, the first African American to rise from being a Naval recruit to Master Chief, the highest rank an enlisted man can achieve. Brashear also distinguished himself as being the Navy’s first African American master diver. *Men of Honor* documents Brashear’s dynamic struggle as he endured discrimination, failures, and tragedies as he pursued his goals.

This film illustrates race relations at the microlevel and macrolevel of analysis. It also illustrates the three sociological perspectives. Depending upon one’s point of view, segregation in the military was an example of both the functional and conflict perspective. The symbolic interactionist perspective can also be applied to explain the segregation endured by African Americans serving in the military.

When commenting on changes in gender stereotypes in the film industry, Debra Zimmerman, executive director of the organization *Women Make Movies*, said “I believe that social change

happens one person at a time.” Carl Brashear is that one person that initiated social change that spread throughout the Navy and other branches of the service at a time when it was urgently needed. Students will find his story inspirational and dramatic.

Exercises and Questions

1. The U.S. military is composed of a disproportionate number of African Americans. This situation existed before the military services were integrated as well as after President Truman’s proclamation. It existed when Americans were drafted into military service as well as since the all-volunteer army was established. What are some reasons for this imbalance during the different periods? Did the President’s proclamation to integrate the military in 1948 end segregation? Why not? How would you classify the segregation that existed in the military prior to and after the President’s 1948 proclamation?
2. How could Billy Sunday, as the NCO in charge of the diving school, make Brashear’s adjustment and acceptance easier when he first introduced Brashear to the other sailors?
3. Theories of prejudice include Scapegoat Theory developed by John Dollard and the Authoritarian Personality Theory developed by Theodor Adorno. For each of the following characters in *Men of Honor*, pick which theory most applies to explain their reasons for prejudice and why.

Master Chief Billy Sunday
“Mr. Pappy”

Captain Hanks
Petty Officer Rourke

4. Robert Merton developed a typology of discrimination and prejudice that can be applied to individuals. Merton’s grid is based on whether or not an individual discriminates on one axis and whether or not the individual is prejudiced on the other. The resulting four typologies include Prejudiced Discriminator, Non-Prejudiced Discriminator, Prejudiced Non-Discriminator, and Non-Prejudiced Non- Discriminator.

Does the Individual Discriminate?

<i>Is the Individual Prejudiced?</i>	Yes	No
	<i>Prejudiced Discriminator</i>	<i>Prejudiced Non-Discriminator</i>
Yes	<i>Non-Prejudiced Discriminator</i>	<i>Non-Prejudiced Non-Discriminator</i>
No		

Based upon these typologies, determine which typology best fits each of the characters in *Men of Honor* and justify your decisions.

Master Chief Billy Sunday
Mrs. Gwen Sunday
“Mr. Pappy”
Seaman Snowhill

Captain Hanks
Captain Pullman
Petty Officer Rourke

Which characters in the film demonstrated a change in their initial typology? Why?

5. How can legislation or governmental proclamations change race relations? If so, how, if not, why not? Without legislative intervention, what are some other agents of social change that can accomplish the same purpose?
6. In the film, Carl Brashear commented to Chief Sunday that his greatest motivation to become a master Navy diver was because others told him he could not have it. Does this denial of a goal serve as a similar inspiration to other African American men? If not, why not? What were some other options Brashear had in response to the Navy's reluctance to accommodate his efforts to become a master diver? How does this denial of a goal based on race contribute to social problems, specifically those facing young African American men? What sociological theories help to explain the behavior of young African American men who suffer opportunity blockage as Brashear did?

Tuskegee Airmen (1995)

Major Application: Race and Ethnicity

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Culture, Society and Social Groups, Socialization and Life Course, Social Stratification, Political Systems, Technology, Collective Behavior and Social Change.

Major Characters: Laurence Fishburne Jr. as Hannibal Lee, an African American aviation Cadet at Tuskegee Air Field
 Cuba Gooding Jr. as Billy "A-Train" Roberts, an African American aviation cadet at Tuskegee Air Field
 Malcolm Jamal Warner as Leroy Cappy, an African American aviation cadet at Tuskegee Air Field
 Alan Payne as Walter Peoples, an African American aviation cadet at Tuskegee Air Field who had already earned a pilot's license
 Courtney Vance as Lt. Glenn, an African American flight instructor at the Tuskegee Air Field
 John Lithgow as Senator Conyer, the primary opponent to the integration of the armed services and training of African American pilots
 Andre Braugher as Lt. Col. Benjamin O. Davis, commander of the Fighting 99th, the first African American squadron in the European Theater
 Daniel Hugh Kelly as Col. Noll Rogers, the base commander of the Tuskegee Air Field
 Christ McDonald as Maj. Sherman Joy, second in command of the Tuskegee Air Field

MPAA Rating: R Harsh language, vulgarity, racial slurs, mild violence.

Synopsis of Film: In 1943 the United States and the world were locked in a vicious war on two fronts, one in the Pacific Theater and the other in Europe. In America, the number of men eligible for the draft and capable of being trained as pilots was at a critical shortage. In an effort to increase the size of its armed forces, the United States military engaged in an experiment to see if African American men could be trained to become combat pilots. The experiment, as noble as it may seem by today's standards, was highly controversial in the mid-40s when "separate but equal" was sanctioned by law. African American men were not only excluded from flight schools but also from serving in any of the combat roles. Previous to this, the positions held by African American servicemen was limited to cooks, stewards, supply, and other support services. The African American men chosen for this innovative training were heroes all. Completing their training and earning their wings required individual and collective courage greater than that needed to face the enemy over Africa and Europe.

After being accepted for flight school, the cadets encounter three distinctly different personalities responsible for their training. The firm, but fair commander of the training facility is Colonel Noll Rogers. His second in command, Major Sherman Joy, is in direct contrast of Rogers, embracing a prejudiced and discriminatory style in his leadership. The third training officer, Lt. Glenn, is an African American pilot who had previously served in the Canadian Air Force and has air-combat experience over Europe.

As the cadet training progresses, each African American trainee must endure escalating incidents of racism and mistreatment. After earning their wings, problems related to the race consciousness of other fliers continues to plague them in the squadrons they are assigned to in the Mediterranean and Europe. Eventually, the members of the 332nd Fighter Squadron are accepted by other fliers, not because of their color, but because of their courage.

Tuskegee Airmen is a chronicle in American history that cannot be over emphasized in its importance to the African American community and the challenge it presented to those chosen as the first African American military pilots.

Exercises and Questions

1. If the men who took part in the flight training at Tuskegee Air Field had failed in their attempt to become pilots, it could have destroyed more hopes and dreams than their own. Why?
2. When the air cadets arrive at the training base of Tuskegee Air Field they are given two very different "welcoming" speeches by Col. Noll Rogers and Major Sherman Joy. Do you believe the content of each speech was staged for a psychological motivation of the air cadets? Why?
3. Even though all the air cadets were African American, they had very little in common other than race. Explain some of the points of diversity among the cadets as well as other issues they shared.

4. Why do you think Major Joy required the cadets to take the flying exam a second time? Provide answers that may be more optimistic as well as reasons that were more negativistic.
5. Why do the cadets mimic Major Joy's speech and why is this minstrelization not seen as humorous by at least one cadet?
6. How does the explanation Major Joy provides Lt. Col. Rogers for retesting the cadets show his true sentiments towards the experiment?
7. What importance in leadership does Hannibal Lee provide the other cadets?
8. Not considering the aftermath of Cadet Walter Peoples being dismissed from the program, was the discipline issued to People's appropriate? Why or why not?
9. Hannibal's (Laurence Fishburne Jr.) comments, "I rather be here by myself rather than play with a pair of jokers who cannot figure out the game." What did he really mean by this? Just what exactly was the real "game"?
10. Why does Lt. Glenn probably have the toughest and loneliest job position on the base?
11. Why and how can the scientific study cited by Senator Conyer regarding African Americans in technically difficult positions come to the conclusions it, especially since the study was done at "one of our most prestigious universities."
12. When Lt. Col. Davis (Andre Braugher) and Lt. Lee (Laurence Fishburne Jr.) have the discussion over members of their squadron being denied air-combat missions, why did Lt. Col. Davis take the more conservative attitude?

Remember the Titans (2000)

Major Application: Race and Ethnicity

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Culture, Society and Social Groups, Socialization and Life the Course, Social Stratification, Education and Society

Major Characters: Denzel Washington as Coach Herman Boone
 Will Patton as Coach Bill Yoast
 Wood Harris as Julius Campbell
 Ryan Hurst as Gerry Bertier
 Craig Kirkwood as Jerry "Rev" Harris
 Ethan Suplee as Louie Lastik
 Kip Pardue as Ronnie "Sunshine" Bass
 Hayden Panettiere as Sheryl Yoast
 Nicole Ari Parker as Carol Boone

MPAA Rating: PG Thematic elements and some language

Synopsis of Film: *Remember the Titans* is a very good, well written story about integration of a high school football team in Virginia. In 1970, segregation ended and a championship football team takes on a whole different complexion. Herman Boone (Denzel Washington) becomes the head coach of a team that already has a successful coach played by Will Patton, who stays on as an assistant for the good of the team. The students, both black and white, work hard to overcome differences and continue the team's winning tradition. As a latent function of their effort, the students unite the members of the community and teach them how the needs of an organization, whether it be a team or a town, transcend race.

Based in a true story, the film is a character drama that illustrates team building, social bonding, and a positive integration effort.

Exercises and Questions

1. At the beginning of the film, how does each of the groups exhibit in-group/out-group attitude and behavior? Why was this understandable and perhaps the only method of reaction for the first meeting.
2. What leadership style does Coach Boone (Denzel Washington) exhibit at his first team meeting? Would any other leadership style be as effective? Why or why not?
3. How does Coach Boone's comparison of the team to a family aid in his overall plan to bring the players together?
4. Why does Louie (Ethan Supplee) surprise everyone when he sits with Julius during lunch at training camp? Considering Louie's background, is there a simple reason that may explain his surprising behavior?
5. What stereotypes do the white players have of the African Americans students? What stereotypes do the African American students have of the white students? How do both groups learn to appreciate each other and develop an integrated culture of their own? What stereotypes did each of the coach's little girls have of the other?
6. At the Gettysburg battlefield, Coach Boone tells the team they don't necessarily need to like each other, but they must first respect each other. How does each player learn to respect his fellow team mates?
7. Coach Boone tells his team they are better off for dealing with the race issue than the team they are facing for the state championship which is all white. Why?
8. Integrating T. C. Williams High School was a matter of legislation. Making integration work was more difficult. If you were in an administrative position responsible for integrating a school under the same circumstances, how would you do it? What activities and programs would you implement to bring the students and community together?

9. How is *Remember the Titans* an example of the functionalist perspective? the symbolic interactionist perspective? the conflict perspective?
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Other Films to Consider

Amistad (1998). This is an account of the little known Spanish slave ship *La Amistad*, whose “cargo” broke its chains in 1839. The enslaved Africans wind up in a United States courtroom attracting the attention of ex-president John Quincy Adams. Directed by Steven Spielberg, the cast includes Morgan Freeman, Anthony Hopkins, and Matthew McConaughey. Describe how the ideology of the pro-slave advocates conflicts with that of the abolitionists. What is the basis of each group’s ideology? Rated R.

Blazing Saddles (1974). Mel Brooks points the finger of satire at those who take advantage of others through discrimination, profiling, and stereotypes. This saga of cowboys and imbeciles was billed as a “riotous Western spoof” and considered to be Brooks’ most successful comedy. A closer inspection of the film illustrates the insensitivity of the dominant culture and some of the ugliness in society. If not for the cast of established comedians, and the brilliant ability of Brooks as a writer and director, the film could have been considered as insulting to certain groups. Make a list of the stereotypes cited in the film, most of which are directed against the African American workers. Can you identify the historical basis for these stereotypes? In *Blazing Saddles*, Brooks exploits racial profiling for the sake of humor? Do you find this technique acceptable as a method of entertainment? Is there a case to be made for the film being insensitive to African Americans and other minority groups? Defend your answer. Rated R.

Geronimo: An American Legend (1993). This film is an account of the legendary Apache leader and the Army’s attempt to subjugate this proud Native American tribe. The violence and racism experienced by this tribe and their often ignored culture are well documented. Why are Native Americans referred to as “the invisible minority”? Trace the various dominant-minority group relations faced by Native Americans from their first contact with Europeans up to the present day. Examine the evidence that suggests Native Americans have been the most neglected, maltreated, violated and exploited race in American history. Make a comparison between the atrocities dealt Native Americans and those dealt to African- Americans, Asian-Americans, and Latino-Americans. Can this maltreatment be rectified? If so, how? Rated R.

Kung Fu (1971). The Karate focus of this movie gives it notoriety and capitalizes on the popularity of martial arts. Beneath the kicks and thrusts is a story of racism, hatred and mistreatment as told through the life of Kwi Chan Kane, a young Buddhist monk traveling through the American West in the late 1800s. Based upon your viewing of ***Kung Fu***, consider the role of Asian Americans in the history of the United States. If it is a disservice to group all Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, etc.) races and cultures together under one category, why do so many non-Asians do so? Why are Asian-Americans subjected to more positive stereotypes (being called the ‘model minority’, studious, hard working) than other minorities? Made for TV. Not Rated.

Malcolm X (1992). Spike Lee directs Denzel Washington and Angela Bassett in this moving biography of black activist Malcolm “X” Shabaz. Lee traces Shabaz’s life as he goes through a series of changes from street hustler to prison inmate to religious convert as he ascends to national leadership while preaching the teachings of Elijah Muhammad. The film is considered to be an excellent portrait of a controversial leader who was eventually assassinated by one of his own followers. Did Malcolm X speak for and represent all African Americans? If not, can you identify the profile of the African American population that would most likely be the followers of a Malcolm X? Why would your profile of this group have the qualities you identified? How would you describe Malcolm’s leadership style? Would any other style of leadership be effective? Rated PG-13.

Chapter Nine Gender, Sexuality, and Society

A League of Their Own (1999)

Major Application: Gender, Sexuality, and Society

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Culture, Society and Social Groups, Socialization and the Life Course, Collective Behavior and Social Change

Major Characters: Geena Davis as Dottie Hinson, “the Queen of Diamonds”, catcher and team leader of the Rockford Peaches
Tom Hanks as Jimmy Dugan, a washed up big leaguer who becomes coach of the Rockford Peaches
Lori Petty as Kit Hinson, the sister of Dottie who is a pitcher for the Rockford Peaches
Madonna as Mae Mondabito, a sassy outfielder who doesn’t quite meet the standards of being the “all-American girl”
Rosie O’Donnell as Doris Murphy, a hard-hitting third baseman
Megan Cavanaugh as Marla Hooch, the second baseman who “would have been playing for the Yankees if she were a boy”
Bill Pullman as Private Bob Hinson, husband of Dottie who is in the service fighting the war in Europe
Jon Lovitz as Ernie Capidino, the sarcastic scout who recruits Dottie and
David Strathan as Ira Lowenstein, who developed the women’s team

MPAA Rating: PG Suggested sexuality, mild language

Synopsis of Film: The year is 1943 and the male professional baseball players are involved in the war effort overseas. The public misses America’s game, however, and in response to public demand a group of entrepreneurs assemble a league of female ball players to compete nationwide.

Responding to the call are Dottie and Kit Hinson, who escape the daily routine of running a dairy farm for the excitement of big league competition. Recruited by major league scout Ernie Capidono (Jon Lovitz), Dottie and Kit are signed into the league with a salary of \$75 a week, two and a half times what they were making at the dairy. The film presents one of the first organized efforts of women in professional athletics, the determination it required and the obstacles they needed to overcome to succeed. It illustrates the sexual stereotypes faced by the women and how they were constantly playing in the shadow of the image of the men.

A never ending sibling rivalry between Dottie and Kit continues throughout the film which adds to the storyline. In addition to the gender issues presented in the film, reference is also made to the racism that existed in professional sports in the 1940s.

Exercises and Questions

1. From the first introduction to the girls' baseball league by Ernie Capadino (Lovitz), he alludes to the women's league as being a matter of sexuality as well as baseball talent. How has this concept of combining sexuality with professional sports continued?
2. How does Capadino (Lovitz) display a sense of male sexism as he rejects Marta from the team after being introduced to her?
3. How does the social commentary by Maida Gillespie denouncing women in professional sports as being a "masculinization of women with enormously dangerous consequences to the home, our children, and our country" represent the thinking of some members of society then as well as now? Note that Ms. Gillespie introduced her comments with reference to the introduction of women into education.
4. How does Dottie demonstrate leadership qualities throughout the story? Provide specific examples.
5. How does the league management maintain a distinction between the sexes based on traditional stereotypes and male expectations including the name of the teams, the players' uniforms, their expected behavior, and off-duty activities?
6. Why does Coach Jimmy Dugan tell Ira Lowenstein "I don't have ball players, I have girls"? Why does his opinion of his team as ball players change?
7. When the ball players are introduced as a part of the newsreel, how are sexist stereotypes of women reinforced?
8. At one of the games the attendance was light because "the tractor show was in town." If the Peaches were a professional men's team, do you think it would have been the same? How does Ira Lowenstein respond to the dwindling attendance? Why was his strategy effective?
9. How is the racism of the 1940s illustrated by the composition of the teams and the incident where the African American woman picks up a foul ball?
10. How is the conflict perspective reinforced by the manner in which the women's league is managed and how it is dissolved at the end of the war? How does Mr. Harvey emphasize that women's baseball was "only a product"?

Courage Under Fire (1996)

Major Application: Gender, Sexuality, and Society

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Culture, Society and Social Groups,

Socialization and Life the Course, Social Stratification, Collective Behavior and Social Change, Technology and Social Change

Major Characters: Denzel Washington as Lieutenant Colonel Nathaniel Serling
Meg Ryan as Captain Karen Emma Walden
Lou Diamond Phillips as Sgt. Monfriez, a member of Walden's helicopter crew
Michael Moriarty as Brigadier General Heshberg, Serling's commanding officer
Sean Astin as Patella
Matt Damon as Specialist Ilario, the medic assigned to the chopper
Bronson Pinchot as Bruno
Seth Gilliam as Altameyer
Tim Guinee as Rady, Walden's co-pilot on the downed chopper
Scott Glenn as Tony Gartner, a reporter from the Washington Post

MPAA Rating: R Graphic violence, harsh language, drug abuse

Synopsis of Film: Captain Karen Walden (Meg Ryan) is a helicopter pilot serving with the U.S. Army in the first Gulf War. During a rescue mission, her chopper goes down under hostile fire and she and her crew must fight off the Iraqis after the crash. Because of the courage Walden displayed, she is nominated for the Medal of Honor and her case is assigned to Lt. Col Serling (Denzel Wahington) for verification before it is officially submitted. Because Walden presumably died shortly before her crew was rescued, Serling must rely on interviews with her crew on which to base his recommendation.

What begins as a routine matter becomes clouded in controversy as Serling interviews the members of the crew. Serling is determined to discover the real story behind Captain Walden's death and what transpired in the Iraqi desert. To do so, he tracks down hard to find witnesses, dodges an investigative reporter from the Washington Post, and fights off his own demons that include flashbacks to his own combat experience in Iraq and a serious drinking problem.

The film adds substance to the plot as Serling travels to Walden's hometown where he interviews her parents and meets her daughter. He also contacts the family of one of his best friends who is killed by friendly fire during the Gulf War. The pain and sacrifice of the combat experience is well illustrated for both those who served and the affect it had on their loved ones.

Exercises and Questions

1. On what grounds are women rejected as equals in male dominated occupations? Are there practical grounds on which to base a division of labor on sex in certain military specialties or other occupations? Support your answer.
2. Assess Captain Walden's leadership style and effectiveness based on the accounts presented by the co-pilot (Rady) and Specialist Ilario.

3. When interviewed after the war by Colonel Serling, Co-pilot Rady's wife comments that Walden was "so butch....these women who want to be officers." What would be a practical reason for Mrs. Rady's cynicism? Is there a movement that would reinforce Mrs. Rady's position of sex being used as a division of labor and the maintenance of "traditional" roles for women?
4. Compare the leadership skills of Lt. Col. Serling's wife, Meredith (Regina Taylor) to the leadership skills of Captain Walden as the story is told by the co-pilot and Specialist Ilario.
5. What reasons would Sgt. Monfriez (Lou Diamond Phillips) have for distorting the truth about the incident and the way he described Captain Walden's behavior?
6. What forces are motivating Lt. Col. Serling to pursue the details of the Walden investigation with such tenacity? Is it because she will be the first woman to receive the Medal of Honor, because of the discrepancies noted by Sgt. Monfriez, or some other reason?
7. Describe the social networks of both Captain Walden and Lt. Col. Serling. How can networks such as theirs be supportive as well as threatening to an individual's career?
8. If the government reinstituted the draft, should women be subjected to it the same as men? Why or why not?
9. If you do not believe women should be subjected to the draft in a similar manner as men, do you believe all military occupational specialties (MOS) should be available to women in the service including combat positions? Why or why not?
10. How are Karen Walden as an Army officer and Meredith Serling both examples of feminism in their own regard?

Other Films to Consider

Flashdance (1983). Bright lights and glittering images, high energy, and an upbeat musical score will appeal to younger viewers as the plot of this film follows the life of an attractive and petite young lady in Pittsburgh, PA. Torn between two vocational interests, "Alex" (Jennifer Beals) takes a job as a welder in Pittsburgh's steel industry by day. But she also works as an exotic dancer at night. To make matters even more complicated, she has attracted the courtship of her rich and handsome boss. In *Flashdance*, how does the main character (Jennifer Beals) serve as a symbol that reinforces as well as contradicts the paradigms of the feminist movement? What is significantly different about the manner in which she conducts herself as an exotic dancer and how some of her fellow dancers behave? Rated R.

The Ballad of Little Jo (1993). A genteel young woman in 1866 who has a child out of wedlock flees to the American West and quickly learns that the only way to survive on her own is to do it

as a man. She runs her own ranch as a man and makes the best of what would have been an impossible situation as a woman. Based upon your viewing of *The Ballad of Little Jo*, consider the reasons why a woman might wish to disguise herself as a man for her entire adult life. What does this true story tell us about the differences between men and women? Are they based on physical differences or socially imposed expectations of behavior? Consider the options Little Jo would have had for survival if she retained her identity as a woman. This film was recently released on DVD. Rated R.

The Burning Bed (1984). This true story shows the plight of a poor battered wife, who because of her poverty and children is economically unable to leave her husband. In her desperation she kills him by setting him afire following an episode of beating and humiliation in order to escape her horrid circumstances. The movie was one of the highest rated TV movies of all time. Farrah Fawcett was nominated for an Emmy award for her portrayal of the battered woman. What conditions contribute to a woman staying with her husband or live-in partner when she is continually abused? How can battered women become more assertive in determining their destinies without resorting to killing a battering spouse or boyfriend? Made for TV. Not Rated.

The Crying Game (1992). An IRA volunteer helps capture a British soldier only to befriend him. Killed in a freak accident after escaping execution, the soldier makes a request of his IRA adversary to break the news of his death to his girlfriend. A complicated tale of romance and plot twists ensue, including the revelation that the girlfriend of the deceased soldier is really a man. The film moves quickly, sparked by periods of the development of this unusual romance and well planned action scenes. The film offers an incisive perspective on one man's struggle to accept that his affections are toward a person and not a gender. If you believed you were in a heterosexual relationship only to discover your partner was the same sex, what do you think your initial reaction would be followed by your secondary reaction after dealing with the ramifications of the event? How significant are social norms in our choice of friends and lovers? Rated R.

Tomorrow Never Dies (1997). In his second portrayal of Agent 007, Pierce Brosnan is cast with three powerful women. Judy Dench plays "M", director of MI-6 (British intelligence and head of the double-O section); Terri Hatcher plays the "Bond-girl", a former love interest who is now married to villain Jonathan Pryce; and Michel Yeoh plays Wai Lin, a crafty and lethal Chinese agent who is Bond's equal. Without compromising any of the action, gadgetry, or Bond-wit the addition of the multi-dimensional supporting cast of women adds a new dimension to the series. Present a profile of the three separate and distinct personalities of the women characters in *Tomorrow Never Dies*. How does "M" adopt her former counterpart's "male" characteristics in order to be an effective director of an intelligence agency? Could she be as effective in this role if she were more glamorous and seductive, as portrayed by Terri Hatcher? How is Michel Yeoh a composite of the other two characters? Rated PG-13.

What Women Want (2000). Mel Gibson plays a cocky, chauvinistic ad agency executive who magically acquires the ability to hear what women are thinking. He puts this talent to especially good use when someone else (Helen Hunt) is chosen for a promotion he was in line to receive. The film pokes fun at many stereotypes men hold of women but has the potential to be transformed into a good training aid for gender relations. When regarded as purely entertainment the movie is spontaneous and likable by audiences of both sexes. In *What Women Want*, Mel

Gibson has a fascinating gift. How did this gift impact his effectiveness? Do you feel his talent was a realistic portrayal of what women want or a stereotype exploited for entertainment? If you had such an opportunity, would you accept it if a condition of its acceptance was that the gift was irreversible? Why or why not? Rated PG-13.

Chapter Ten

Age and Society

Space Cowboys (2000)

Major Application: Age and Society

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Culture, Society and Social Groups, Socialization and Life Course, Social Stratification, Technology and Social Change.

Major Characters: Clint Eastwood as retired Air Force Colonel and NASA engineer Dr. Frank Corvin
Tommy Lee Jones as retired Air Force Colonel and test pilot William “Hawk” Hawkins
Donald Sutherland as retired Air Force engineer NASA design specialist Jerry O’Neil
James Garner as retired Air Force navigator and Rev. “Tank” Sullivan
Marcia Gay Harden as NASA engineer Sarah Holland
James Cromwell as NASA director Bob Gerston
Loren Dean as Astronaut Roger Hines
Courtney B. Vance as Astronaut Ethan Glance
Blair Brown as Flight Surgeon Dr. Anne Carothers
William DeVane as Project Director Eugene Davis

MPAA Rating: PG-13 Mild language

Synopsis of Film: William Hawkins (Tommy Lee Jones) and Frank Corvin (Clint Eastwood) were two of the finest test pilots in the United States Air Force. Working with Jerry O’Neil (Donald Sutherland) and “Tank” Sullivan (James Garner), they made up Team Daedalus, a band of courageous, albeit reckless, Air Force officers. Together they set speed and altitude records (and in the process destroyed multimillion dollar aircraft) in the late 1950s as the Air Force began its exploration of space. On their last test flight before NASA took over the exploration of space, Hawkins and Corvin crash a four million dollar experimental aircraft. The shift in focus of space exploration devastates Corvin and Hawkins, especially Hawkins, who wanted to be among America’s first astronauts.

Forty years later, a Russian satellite in a decaying orbit threatens Earth. Too big to be captured by the Space Shuttle, a team of engineers needs to make a “service call” to the failed satellite. In an international spirit of cooperation the United States offers NASA’s assistance to the Russians. A second problem arises when it is discovered the satellite’s guidance program was a copy of the one used in Sky Lab which was developed by retired Air Force Colonel and former test pilot Frank Corvin. Only Corvin has the ability to repair the failed satellite. In one desperate attempt to get Team Daedalus into space, Corvin blackmails his former commanding officer, Bob Gerston, who is now a director for NASA, into sending him, along with Hawkins, O’Neil, and Sullivan into space.

The resulting training period and mission become a series of conflicts ranging from a bitter rivalry between Hawkins and Corvin, one between Corvin and Gerston, and one between the young astronauts and the octogenarian astronauts. Jerry O'Neil adds a bit of humor to the quartet as the "babe magnet." Love interests developing between Hawkins and engineer Sarah Holland and O'Neil and Flight Surgeon Dr. Anne Carothers.

Following a series of unexplained twists in the plot, Team Daedalus blasts off with two young astronauts as "back up" to repair what they believe is a Russian communications satellite. Arriving at their destination, they discover the satellite is actually a nuclear weapons "Doomsday" missile platform left over from the Cold War. Another series of snafus places the mission and the world in mortal danger as the shuttle is crippled with the satellite on the verge of launching its missiles against predetermined targets in the United States. The ingenuity of Team Daedalus saves the planet, but not without its own tragedy.

Released two years prior to the tragic loss of the space shuttle Columbia on February 1, 2002, the film's plot is sobering, but unrealistic to imagine a space vehicle as battered as the one depicted in the film could survive re-entry. Nonetheless, the plot, characters, and storyline provide a pinnacle around which considerable discussion and evaluation can be generated.

Exercises and Questions

1. How are the social institutions of politics and science interrelated as suggested by Director Gerston in his discussion with engineer Sarah Holland in the opening of the film?
2. Collectively, which theory of aging (Social Disengagement Theory, Activities Theory, Subculture of Aging, Exchange Theory) best fits the four "Space Cowboys" in their work in retired civilian life? Why?
3. Collectively, which theory of aging best fits the four "Space Cowboys" when they join NASA? Why?
4. There are four types of aging (population, biological, psychological, and social). Early in the film, Jerry O'Neil (Donald Sutherland) accused Frank Corvin (Clint Eastwood) of which aging type when they meet at the theme park? What type of aging does William Hawkins represent after his diagnosis of pancreatic cancer? What types of aging do Corvin, Hawkins, O'Neil, and Sullivan collectively represent?
5. During their appearance on the Jay Leno Show, Leno makes the comment "something about men never change" when referring to O'Neil as a "babe magnet." In reality, all four of the main characters "never changed" in many respects. Discuss how each member of Team Daedalus maintained a similar lifestyle with substitutions rather than changes and how they would be a model of the exchange theory of aging.

6. What are the similarities and differences between John Glenn being sent into space aboard a space shuttle and the concept of sending the four aging “Space Cowboys” into space as depicted in the film?
7. The film is entertaining but under all the circumstances depicted, highly improbable. Using the concept of sociological thinking (asking questions and questioning answers), why is this so?
8. Although they may not be as dramatic, collect a series of examples of Americans and others who have made major contributions to their nation, culture, or discipline who were over 65 years of age and the accomplishments for which they are noted.
9. How has the concept of retirement changed throughout history? How were the elderly viewed in the hunting and gathering society, the pastoral society, the horticultural society, the agrarian society, the industrial society, and the postindustrial society? Why did the image and treatment of the elderly change in each of the sociocultural revolutions?
10. Although it is premature for most students, at what age do you believe you will retire? What are your specific plans for retirement....rest and relaxation, a second career, some other interest?

The Crew (2000)

Major Application: Age and Society

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Culture, Society and Social Groups, Socialization and Life Course, Social Stratification, Family and Society, Healthcare and Medicine, Collective Behavior and Social Change.

Major Characters: Richard Dreyfuss as Robert (Bobby “the Schnook”) Bartellemeo, the leader of “The Crew” in its prime as well as in retirement
 Burt Reynolds as Joey (“Bats”) Pistella, the short-tempered mobster
 Don Hedaya as Mike (“the Brick”) Donatelli who works part-time in a mortuary and also maintains contact with his former “family” members of the mob
 Seymour Cassell as Tony (“the Mouth”) Donato, the womanizing former wise guy who still has it for the ladies
 Jennifer Tilly as Maureen Lowenstein, the exotic dancer in the “leisure entertainment” business
 Carrie-Anne Moss as Olivia Neal, the daughter of Bobby and police detective
 Lainie Kazan as Pepper Lowenstein, Maureen’s step-mother
 Miquel Sandoval as Raul Ventana, the drug lord
 Jeremy Piven as Detective Steve Menteer

MPAA Rating: PG-13 Sexual content, violence, and language

Synopsis of Film: The film begins with a narration by Bobby (Richard Dreyfuss) which provides a summary of the work he did in his prime as a “wiseguy” in organized crime along with “Bats” (Burt Reynolds), the “Brick” (Don Hedaya), and the “Mouth” (Seymour Cassell). Together, they were bigger than life possessing power, respect, and success. But success didn’t come without a price. For Bobby (Dreyfuss), he suffered a failed marriage and loss of contact with his daughter Olivia (Carrie-Ann Moss).

Now in their senior years, “the Crew” is retired in Florida, living in a run down hotel, the Raj Mahal, and facing eviction in favor of a younger generation looking to move into the Raj. That’s when they decide there is only one thing to do, turn back the clock and pull one last “mob hit” in order to save their home. The grandfatherly gangsters make the necessary contacts for a shotgun and steal an unclaimed, unidentified corpse from the mortuary where the Brick works to make it appear that a mob murder went down in the Raj Mahal. The result is loss of interest in the Raj by the younger generation and a quick exit by many of the current residents leaving the Crew with the security of their housing.

But as the Crew solves one problem, it is beleaguered by two others. The unclaimed corpse was the father of a South American drug lord. The elderly gentleman “escaped” from a nursing home only to die of natural causes in the street. Without identification, he was filed under a “John Doe” in the mortuary. The publicity around the incident brings his father’s “murder” to the son’s attention who interprets the “hit” as a siege against his crime empire. Even though Bobby and the others are aware of this, they feel any connection they had to the incident will go undiscovered. That’s until “Mouth” tells Maureen, an exotic dancer (Jennifer Tilly) about the “hit” during “pillow talk.”

After that, the “Crew” is faced with elimination by the drug lord, discovery by the police who are also investigating the staged hit, and attempting to satisfy the demands of Maureen. The resulting series of conflict are finally resolved as the “Brick” recruits an army of golden year goodfellows from across the country to come to their aid.

Exercises and Questions

1. After Bobby introduction of “the Crew” at the beginning of the film, how does the image of the Crew reflect stereotypes of the elderly?
2. The “Brick” notes early in the film that he keeps in touch with his former gangster buddies. What theory of aging would best apply to the “Brick” and why?
3. Based on the various theories of aging, why are the former mobsters unhappy at the beginning of the film, especially Bobby (Richard Dreyfuss) and Bats (Burt Reynolds)? Was their unhappiness a direct result of aging or were there other factors that contributed more significantly to their situations?

4. How does each member of the Crew illustrate the social constructionist concept of aging? How does each member represent the functionalist perspective? Using the symbolic interactionist perspective, how does their image change during the course of the film?
 5. How did the material culture for the members of the Crew change from the time they were wiseguys to the time they were in retirement? How did their nonmaterial culture change? Which experienced the greatest change and why?
 6. How do the members of the Crew reflect the various theories of aging including Social Disengagement Theory, Activity Theory, Subcultural Theory, and Exchange Theory? Which theory fits the Crew best collectively? Which theory fits each individual member of the Crew most appropriately?
 7. Compare and contrast the situations and adjustments experienced by the Crew with those faced by the “Space Cowboys”. How are they similar and different? Make a comparison of the characters. Which astronaut has similar qualities as Bobby, as Bats, as Brick, and as Mouth? Do you view this as just a coincidence or a continued stereotyping of the elderly?
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Other Films to Consider

Grumpy Old Men (1993). Jack Lemmon, Walter Matthau, and Burgess Meredith are grumpy old men who are mellowed by the warmth of Ann-Margaret. Lemmon and Matthau are two mateless Minnesota retirees and rabid ice fishermen whose lifelong feud escalates when an attractive widow (Ann-Margaret) moves in across the street. How is age illustrated as being a social construct? What can be said about the male characters “acting their age”? What are the realizations they must face regarding their mortality? How are they reminded of it and how do they deal with it? Rated PG-13.

Grumpier Old Men (1996). Sophia Loren joins Ann-Margaret and the grumpy duo of Lemmon and Matthau in the sequel. Now reconciled, the longtime neighbors/nemeses argue over their off springs’ pending wedding while a new arrival in town (Loren) turns their bait shop into a restaurant. Since Lemmon got the girl in the original, it’s Matthau’s turn to be the focus of a love interest. How is age illustrated as being a social construct? What can be said about the male characters “acting their age”? What are the realizations they must face regarding their mortality? How are they reminded of it and how do they deal with it? What are the differences in the way these issues are addressed in *Grumpier Old Men* compared to the original movie *Grumpy Old Men*? PG-13.

Nobody’s Fool (1994). The film is a picaresque look at a small-town gentleman named Sully (Paul Newman) who never seems to make the right choices in life. Beneath his loser image is a methodical and street-smart survivor. The film addresses Sully’s efforts to find himself and improve his relationship with his estranged son, while battling his friendly nemesis, Carl Roebuck, played by Bruce Willis. What theory of aging would best apply to Sully in his effort to find happiness? Why is Sully so preoccupied with bettering Roebuck? Rated R.

On Golden Pond (1981). Henry Fonda plays a brilliant but crotchety retired professor angry to be 80 years old and afraid of losing his faculties. Katharine Hepburn is his devoted and all-knowing wife and Jane Fonda plays their alienated daughter. Conflicts and reconciliation takes place between the three. This was Henry Fonda's last feature prior to his death. He won an Oscar for best actor, as did Hepburn for best actress. Consider the sociological aspects of aging as depicted by Fonda and Hepburn in *On Golden Pond*. Give specific examples from the movie that indicate the physical, psychological, and social aspects of aging. How does aging at the time this film is set differ from aging in the 21st century?

Cocoon (1985). Upon a previous trip to earth, aliens from the planet Antarea leave a number of cocoons in a swimming pool of a house they rented in a small Florida town. When a group of trespassing seniors swim in this pool containing the alien cocoons, they find themselves energized with youthful vigor. The rejuvenated seniors offer to help the Antereans recover their cocoons. What stereotypes are presented regarding the elderly? In your opinion, do the elderly actually seek a "fountain of youth" and if so, under what conditions? Rated PG-13.

Chapter Eleven

Family and Society

My Big Fat Greek Wedding (2002)

Major Application: Family and Society

Secondary Applications: Culture, Society and Social Groups, Socialization and Life the Course, Social Stratification, Race and Ethnicity, Religion and Society

Major Characters: Nia Vardalos as Toula Portokalos, a young Greek woman who falls in love with a non-Greek (to her father's dismay)
Michael Constantine as Gus Portokalos, Toula's father
Christina Eleusiniotis as Toula at age six
Marita as Zouravlioff as Toula as age twelve
John Corbett as Ian Miller, Toula's fiancé
Gia Carides as Cousin Nikki
Joey Fontane as Angelo
Ian Gomez as Mike
Jayne Eastwood as Mrs. White
Fiona Reed as Harriet Miller
Bruce Gray as Rodney Miller
Stavroula Logothettis as Athena
Andrea Martin as Aunt Voula
Louis Mandylor as Nick Portokalos

MPAA Rating: PG Sensuality and language

Synopsis of Film: Fotoula Portokalos is a Greek girl. As such, she is expected to marry a nice Greek boy, have many Greek babies, and spend her spare time in the kitchen cooking for everyone. But romance has not been (Fo)Toula's strong suit and at 30 she is still unmarried, working in the family restaurant. To build her confidence, she takes a college course and leaves the family restaurant to work in her aunt's travel agency. There she meets Ian Miller and falls in love. But Toula's family, especially the father, does not approve of Toula's relationship with a non-Greek.

The father then embarks on a series of matchmaking efforts on his daughter's behalf in an effort to preserve his culture and religion. On the surface, the Portokalos household is a true patriarchy with the father making all the family decisions, including who his daughter will marry. Behind the scenes, the mother demonstrates her prowess to influence the family decision making.

My Big Fat Greek Wedding is an excellent portrayal of several sociological concepts. In addition to illustrating a strong patriarchal home, the film displays ethnocentrism, assimilation, pluralism, cultural conflict, methods of courtship, and marriage.

Exercises and Questions

1. On the surface, the Portokalos household appears to be a classic patriarchal family. How is this more of a façade than an accurate description? How do the women in the house actually control much of the decision making?
2. How is the courtship of Toula by Ian an example of endogamy as well as exogamy?
3. Would you consider the relationship Toula established with Ian that led to marriage an example of the filtering process of courtship or an example of the stimulus-value-role theory of courtship?
4. How does Mr. Portokalos (Michael Constantine) display tendencies of ethnocentrism in dealing with the relationship his daughter Toula establishes with Ian?
5. Compare and contrast the Portokalos family to the “average” American family as you perceive it. Is there really an “average” American family today? Explain your position.
6. Is the portrayal of the Portokalos family more of a stereotype for entertainment purposes or do you see it as an accurate portrayal of a first generation Greek family in America? Explain your answer.
7. Although Mr. Portokalos feels Toula is turning into an “Old Maid” after failing to marry by age 30, how is she more consistent than inconsistent with marriage trends in the United States?
8. Looking at the bright side of family life, what qualities does the marriage of Toula and Ian have that suggests it will be a successful one?

A Night at the Roxbury (1998)

Major Application: Family and Society

Secondary Applications: Culture, Society and Social Groups, Socialization and Life the Course, Social Stratification

Major Characters: Chris Kattan as Doug Butabi
Will Ferrell as Steve Butabi
Molly Shannon as Emily Sanderson
Loni Anderson as Barbara Butabi
Dan Hedaya as Kamehl Butabi
Jennifer Coolidge as the Police woman
Michael Clarke Duncan as the Roxbury Bouncer
Richard Greico as Himself

MPAA Rating: PG-13 Sexuality and language

Synopsis of Film: They're corny and uncoordinated brothers who cruise the hottest nightspots looking for good times and fast babes. They're the Butabi Brothers, Doug and Steve, played by Will Farrell and Chris Kattan of *Saturday Night Live* in their first feature film. Molly Shannon, another *SNL* standout, plays Emily Sanderson, a presumed love interest of Steve Butabi (Will Farrell).

Doug and Steve work at the family floral business by day and cruise the nightclubs in their off time trying to gain entrance into the most exclusive hot spots. But their efforts to be swingers are thwarted, mostly due to their ill-mannered ways and total lack of the necessary social graces. By fate, a Hollywood swinger, Richard Grieco, rear ends their van and to avoid the paperwork of settling a claim he offers to introduce the brothers to Mr. Zadir (Chazz Palminteri) who is one of the biggest movers and shakers in the nightclub industry.

Between working the family business and cruising the nightclubs, the brothers meet up with Emily Sanderson (Molly Shannon) who has a crush on Steve (Will Farrell). After making several strong advances, Emily convinces Steve he has proposed to her. Both families are overjoyed but the relationship with Emily has destroyed the brothers' bond.

Exercises and Questions

1. How is the norm of courtship illustrated by this film? Is the courtship of Emily (Molly Shannon) and Steve (Will Farrell) a matter of endogamy or exogamy? Why?
2. Is the norm of exchange in the relationship an example of symmetrical exchange or complementary exchange? Why?
3. What is the norm of courtship illustrated by Doug Butabi's (Chris Kattan) interest in the Credit Vixen (Meredith Scott Lynn) who he calls regularly to flirt with and have credit card purchases approved?
4. Although the film is intended to be more of a light hearted comedy than a real life situation, why would the marriage between Steve and Emily be ill-fated?

Other Films to Consider

ET: The Extra-Terrestrial (1988). A young Drew Barrymore and Henry Thomas befriend a visitor from another planet in this four-star classic. After being stranded by his crew, the alien creature finds acceptance and love among the children who hide and protect him from the authorities. A bond develops that brings the entire family closer together. What are the positive impacts ET makes on the family that adopts him? How does he serve as the father figure the children lost when their father abandoned them and their mother? Rated PG.

Home Alone (1990). Eight year-old Kevin McCallister (Macaulay Culkin) is left home by mistake as the family takes a Christmas vacation to France. The crafty and innovative lad fends off bumbling burglars who have earmarked his home for invasion. In the process of defending his turf, he brings aid and comfort to an older misunderstood gentleman in the neighborhood with family problems of his own. How does the family appear to be dysfunctional as well as functional? How does it illustrate Durkheim's theories of social solidarity and the social imperative? Rated PG.

Home Alone 2 (1993). The sequel to the original takes Kevin McCallister (Macaulay Culkin) to New York City as his family again flies off to Florida for a holiday vacation. He finds himself battling the same two crooks that attacked him back home, but this time it's in New York's Plaza Hotel. More violent than the original, the yarn still emphasizes family bond and a mother's unconditional love. Rated PG.

Indecent Proposal (1993). John Gage (Robert Redford) is a wealthy multi-millionaire who offers one million dollars to a financially struggling couple to sleep with the beautiful wife (Demi Moore). The husband (Woody Harrelson) regrets the decision after agreeing to the deal and the marriage is wrecked. How is the infidelity in *Indecent Proposal* different and the same as other forms of infidelity among less affluent couples? Whereas the relationship between Gage and Diana (Demi Moore) extends beyond the original deal of one night, what does this suggest about the condition of Diana's and David's (Woody Harrelson) marriage? Rated R.

Meet the Parents (2000). A male nurse (Ben Stiller) meets his girlfriend's parents to ask the father (Robert DiNero) for her hand in marriage. A combination of stress and bad timing combined with the overly protective fatherly instincts of DiNero turns the good intentions of Stiller into one disaster after another. There is an old saying, "marry the girl and marry the family." How does this old adage hold true in *Meet the Parents*? Is this saying applicable today as it was several generations ago? Explain. Rated PG-13.

Mrs. Doubtfire (1993). Daniel Hillard (Robin Williams) is a frustrated husband divorced by his wife, Miranda (Sally Field) after 14 years of marriage. In order to gain access to his children he masquerades as a nanny and persuades the unsuspecting wife to hire him. What lessons can be learned about family role and gender from the status and role each character takes in the film? Based on the available information in the film, do you think Daniel and Miranda would have remained married if Daniel had taken this much responsibility for the family's needs prior to the divorce? Rated PG-13.

One True Thing (1998). Ellen Gulden (Renee Zellweger) is forced to temporarily move back home with her parents (Meryl Streep and William Hurt). The mother becomes terminally ill and in the process of preparing for her loss, Ellen learns to appreciate her mother's dedication and talents. At the same time she re-evaluates the qualities of her father, who she always admired. Excellent acting makes this a rather fast moving and believable drama. Ellen does an about face of her opinion of each of her parents. Why? Are there certain things children should never know about their parents' behavior and simply accept their parents unconditionally? Explain your position. Rated R.

Chapter Twelve Religion and Society

The Passion of the Christ (2004)

Major Application: Religion and Society

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Culture, Society and Social Groups, Deviance and Social Control, Social Stratification, Political Systems, Collective Behavior and Social Change

Major Characters: James Caviezel as Jesus
Monica Bellucci as Magdalene
Claudia Gerini as Claudia Procles
Maia Morgenstern as Mary
Sergio Rubini as Dismas
Rosalinda Celentano as Sata
Luca DeDominicus as Herod
Luca Lionella as Judas
Jarreth J. Merz as Simon
Fabio Sartor as Abenader
Mattia Sbragia as Caiphas
Hristo Shapov as Pontious Pilate

MPAA Rating: R Graphic violence

Synopsis of Film: *The Passion of the Christ* begins at the Garden of Olives where Jesus (James Caviezel) has gone to pray after sitting at the Last Supper. Following his prayer in the Garden, Jesus is betrayed by Judas and taken into custody by the Roman soldiers. The subsequent scenes vividly illustrate the last 12 hours preceding the crucifixion of Jesus.

When released, *The Passion of the Christ* was one of the most controversial and stirring religious films of all time, surpassing *The Last Temptation of Christ*, released in 1988. Even though the viewer is aware of the events to be covered in the film, *The Passion of the Christ* created an emotional upheaval among many viewers. There is documentation of heart attacks, born again experiences, and confessions to crimes made by those who viewed it. The graphic blood letting accounts for its R rating.

Exercises and Questions

1. Why was Christianity considered as a cult and its followers subjected to death?
2. How does the film illustrate the three sociological perspectives...structural functionalism, symbolic interactionism, and the conflict perspective?
3. How did Christianity transform itself from a cult to a church? Why is it not an ecclesia?

4. Identify the various symbols in the film that are linked to Judaism and Christianity and what their meaning is.
 5. How important is martyrdom in the establishment of a religion? Besides Christ, who are others who have been martyred as Christians? Can you identify other religions that have had leaders martyred?
 6. If Jesus had not been martyred do you believe Christianity would have established itself as the most followed religion in the world today? Why or why not?
 7. What is the symbolism of Peter denying Jesus three times and Simon assisting Jesus in carrying the cross?
 8. What is the stereotype of how the Jews are portrayed in the film? the Christians? the Roman soldiers?
 9. Based on the film, develop a profile of the average Christian?
 10. Karl Marx called religion “the opiate of the people.” Why? Why is religion frowned upon and even considered illegal in many totalitarian nations?
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Other Films to Consider

Bedazzled (2000). Brendan Frazier is Elliott, a frustrated nerd-like computer geek who means well but alienates his co-workers and finds himself yearning for the affections of a co-worker. To his rescue comes Elizabeth Hurley (the Devil) who grants him seven wishes in exchange for his soul. After expending six of them trying to win the affection of his love interest, Elliot realizes the deal isn't foolproof. *Bedazzled* and *The Exorcist* portray the Devil quite differently. If you were to do an objective analysis of Lucifer in each film, which version of the Prince (Princess) of Darkness would be the most threatening? Why? Rated PG-13.

Dogma (1999). A young lady who has lost her faith is chosen to save humanity. Outcast angels battle out their differences in this comedy that includes an impressive cast including Ben Affleck, Matt Damon, Linda Fiorentino, and Chris Rock. Based on its core beliefs, how would you classify religion as it is portrayed in *Dogma*? Rated R.

Gandhi (1982). This film is an epic story of India's great leader Mohandas K. Gandhi. Beginning his career as a simple lawyer, Gandhi rises to power, advocating peace and understanding that would transcend the caste system. Directed by Richard Attenborough, the movie features a talented international cast including Ben Kingsley, Candice Bergman, Trevor Howard, and Martin Sheen. It won eight Oscars including Best Picture and Best Actor. What characteristics of leadership does Gandhi demonstrate that gives religious significance to his work and increases his effectiveness? How does the film support the concept that religion is based on people and not ritual? How does this compare with the issue Durkheim raised as to the purpose of religion? Rated PG.

Malcolm X (1992). Spike Lee directs Denzel Washington and Angela Bassett in this moving biography of black activist Malcolm “X” Shabaz. Lee traces Shabaz’s life as he goes through a series of changes from street hustler to prison inmate to religious convert as he ascends to national leadership while preaching the teachings of Elijah Muhammad. The film is considered to be an excellent portrait of a controversial leader who was eventually assassinated by one of his own followers. What type of religion would Islam be classified based on its core beliefs? How does Islam qualify as an ecclesia in some parts of the world and as a church on others? How does *Malcolm X* support the concept that religion is based on people and not ritual? How does this compare with the issue Durkheim raised as to the purpose of religion? Rated PG-13.

The Apostle (1998). This film was the personal effort of Robert Duvall who wrote, directed, produced, and starred in it. After committing a violent crime, a Pentecostal minister (Duvall) goes on the lam spreading the word of Jesus. He finally settles in a small Southern town where he brings hope and religious fulfillment to a community looking for spiritual direction. How does *The Apostle* support the concept that religion is based on people and not ritual? How does this compare with the issue Durkheim raised as to the purpose of religion? Rated PG-13.

The Exorcist (1973). This classic film depicts demonic possession and the response of the Catholic Church to fight it. Linda Blair is a normal 12 year-old in a somewhat dysfunctional family whose body is taken over by Lucifer. When the church gets involved, it turns into a battle between good and evil. Compare and contrast the image of the devil as it is portrayed in *Bedazzled* and *The Exorcist*. How has the concept of evil been used to explain deviant behavior throughout history? Based on Durkheim’s position in *The Normal and the Pathological*, is the presence of the devil a necessity if there is a God? Rated R.

The Last Temptation of Christ (1988). This is a movie that has been characterized as both a “thought provoking and deeply felt drama” and “an unorthodox portrayal of the final days of Jesus Christ”. It suggests Jesus experienced indecision, self-doubt, and a type of mid-life crisis when he realized his divine mission on earth. The movie raises doubt to Jesus being the true Son of God. The presentation of Jesus being very human, including sexual trysts with Mary Magdalene, was highly offensive to Christians and caused numerous protests at theaters. If the film accurately portrays Christ, what impact could this have on Christianity? Does a movie such as *The Last Temptation of Christ* break down a religion’s impact on its members or reinforce it? Rated R.

The Ten Commandments (1956). This film, directed by Cecil B. DeMille, is a four-star classic featuring some of the finest actors of the day. This Biblical epic traces the life of Moses (Charlton Heston) and his impact on the development of Christianity. Nearly four hours long, the film moves rather quickly due in part to Oscar-winning special effects, an excellent cast, and great cinematography. How does *The Ten Commandments* illustrate the functionalist, symbolic interactionist, and conflict perspectives of religion? Do movies such as *The Ten Commandments* make the concept of religion easier to understand or confuse it? Not Rated.

Chapter Thirteen

Education and Society

October Sky (2000)

Major Application: Education and Society

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Socialization and Life Course, Family and Society, Technology and Social Change.

Major Characters: Jake Gyllenhaal as future NASA engineer Homer Hickam Jr.
Laura Dern as high school teacher Miss Riley
Chris Cooper as Homer's father and mine boss, John Hickam
Natalie Canerday as Mrs. Elsie Hickam, Homer's mother
Chris Own as Guentin, Homer's colleague in rocketeering
William Lee Scott as Roy Lee, Homer's second colleague in rocketeering
Chad Linberg as O'Dell, Homer's third colleague in racketeering
Chris Ellis as high school principal, Mr. Turner

MPAA Rating: PG Mild language

Synopsis of Film: The entire nation is shocked when the Soviet Union launches Sputnik, the first artificial earth satellite in 1957. Young Homer Hickam Jr., a high school student in a small coal-mining town, Coalwood, West Virginia, is among those who respond to the Soviet's accomplishment with a sense of humility as well as fear. But this only inspires Homer to someday be a part of an American space program that will eventually make even greater accomplishments.

But Homer's efforts are not without a price. Although he is able to enlist three high school pals in sharing his dream, many of his other classmates ridicule him and he suffers the rejection of his father. He is also accused by the authorities of setting a forest fire. But after several failures, the rocket team of the future has its first successful launch. This leads to an acceptance of many of Homer's peers who had previously laughed at him.

After his father is injured in an accident at the mine, Homer takes on the responsibility of being the family provider. He drops out of school and reluctantly follows in his father's footsteps. Although this interrupts his high school program and rocket building efforts, he earns the respect of his father. But when Homer decides to return to school after his father recovers, there is a new barrier that develops between them. Home tells his father, "the coal mine is your life not mine... I want to go into space". After he returns to school, Homer and his rocket team win the county science fair and go on to the state finals. Eventually, the four high school rocketeers go on to graduate from college, although Homer is the only one to pursue a career in science.

This movie is a true story based on the life of NASA engineer Homer Hickam Jr. and his book *Rocket Boys*. For more information on this remarkable, all-American tale, refer to Homer Hickam's home page at www.homerhickam.com.

Exercises and Questions

1. Compare and contrast the technology featured by the West Virginia coal miners to the news broadcast on the radio in the opening scene.
2. What were the psychological and practical consequences of the Soviet's launching the first earth satellite for the people of Coalwood, West Virginia? Do you feel this impact was more or less severe to people of this rural setting compared to the impact it had on the people of more urban areas? Why?
3. What were some of the setbacks experienced by the young Hickam in his efforts to build and launch a homemade rocket? How do these problems and setbacks compare to the problems experienced by Hickam's idol, Werner Von Braun and his effort to put the first American satellite into orbit?
4. Homer's efforts are considered as a "stunt" by his father. What other efforts in education and scientific efforts in history were considered as fads only to turn into revolutionary milestones?
5. How are the processes of scientific thinking and the sociological imagination exhibited by the young rocketeers in their quest to build and launch their rockets? How important was the community support they received? How does this compare to the social institution of education as it operates today?
6. Why did the "Doubting Thomases" of Homer's high school class change their tune after witnessing Homer's first successful launch?
7. Why is Homer's father so cynical about Homer's efforts to build a rocket? How and why is the school principal's attitude similar to that of Homer's father?
8. As the story unfolds, what qualities do both Homer and his father share even though his father fails to fully appreciate his son's efforts as a racketeer?
9. Miss Riley was Homer's major supporter and a great inspiration to him. Is there anyone you can identify who had a similar effect on your desire to attend college or to accomplish an important goal in life? If so, what were the circumstances? Wouldn't it be nice for that person to receive a letter or card from you thanking you for this inspiration?
10. As Homer's father is showing him an underground mining operation, he begins to cough and wheeze (an early sign of Black Lung Disease). When Homer asks his father if he is alright, the senior Hickam responds, "I was born for this" (meaning mining coal). How is John Hickam's statement an example of self-fulfilling prophecy, tracking, the socialization process, and cultural transmission? Note: twenty years later, John Hickam died of Black Lung Disease which is a deterioration of the lungs due to the damage caused by breathing air contaminated with coal dust and other contaminants as a part of coal mining operations.

11. How does the mining operation and community of Coalwood reflect a classic capitalist economy? What are some of the similarities that a classic Marxist would point out?
 12. The town of Coalwood, West Virginia was closed in 1965, only a few years after Homer graduated from college. In view of this, how important is forecasting for careers in the post-industrial society? If Homer followed in his father's footsteps, as his father envisioned, what would have been his future?
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Mr. Holland's Opus (1995)

Major Application: Education and Society

Secondary Applications: Society and Social Groups, Socialization and the Life Course, Social Stratification

Major Characters: Richard Dreyfuss as Glenn Holland, a talented musician whose love is composing but accepts teaching to support his family
Glenn Headly as Iris Holland, Glenn's wife
as Cole Holland, Glenn's son
W. H. Macy as Vice Principal Walters
Olympia Dukakis as Helen Jacobs, the school principal
Alicia Witt as Gertrude Lang, an enthusiastic but frustrated clarinet player in the school orchestra
Jay Thomas as Bill Meister, football coach and physical education teacher
Terrence Howard as Louis Russ, the bass drum player and athlete
Jean Louisa Kelly as Rowena Morgan, the talented student singer who Mr. Holland coaches and serves as her mentor

MPAA Rating: PG Mild language, suggestive inappropriate themes

Synopsis of Film: Glenn Holland (Richard Dreyfuss) is a passionate musician who dreams of composing one truly memorable piece of music. But as reality often detours the plans of gifted artists, Holland reluctantly takes on a "day job" as a high school music teacher to support his family. Initially Holland is frustrated with teaching and sees it as purely being a "fall back position" that will last a few years before he can dedicate his time to composing. But Mr. Holland eventually finds that his real passion is actually teaching. As a teacher he inspires generations of young people who go on to be Holland's true legacy.

But Glenn Holland's transition from being a theoretical to applied artist doesn't come without personal cost. His family relationships are stressed due to an ever demanding workload at the school and his son is found to be 90 percent deaf. Although the financial burdens of life are less emphasized, he finds he cannot fulfill the role of one status without sacrificing the role expectations of another.

At the conclusion of the film, set in 1995, Principal Walters (William H. Macy) has cut art, drama, and music from the school's curriculum for budgetary reasons. After a stormy and frank encounter with Walters, Glenn Holland retires from teaching. But before he does, his former students, family, and peers give him a send off that places in perspective what it means to be a dedicated classroom teacher, friend, and colleague. .

Exercises and Questions

1. In the opening scene, Glenn Holland asks his wife, "This is definitely not my scene....what kind of people go to work at 7:30 in the morning?" What does this tell you about the creative mind?
2. Principal Jacobs chastises Mr. Holland for categorizing teaching as "a fall-back position." What did Mr. Holland really mean by this remark and why is it offensive to Principal Jacobs?
3. How does the enforcement of the dress code by Vice-Principal Walters at the time this movie is set (early 1960s) compare to the dress and behavior codes in today's schools?
4. Principal Jacobs tells Mr. Holland, "A teacher is two jobs....to fill young minds with knowledge and, more important, to give those minds a compass so that knowledge doesn't go to waste." How does this analysis of the position of a high school teacher fit in today's concept of public education? How does it fit into college teaching?
5. How does Mr. Holland make education relative to other aspects of life? How is this related to the sociological imagination?
6. Why do Principal Jacobs and Vice Principal Walters disagree with Mr. Holland on what the proper subject matter is to teach music to his students? Can you identify other periods in history when social constructionists and moral entrepreneurs decided what the proper school curriculum was? Did you ever suspect similar censorship to have existed when you were in high school or in your college studies?
7. Coach Meister has a heated discussion with Mr. Holland over teaching Lou Russ (his wrestling star) how to play an instrument. The Coach admits that he had always been indebted to the one person who believed in him. This person (a teacher) gave him a chance to excel in the one thing he was good at and made the difference in his life. How does this relate to the relevance of educational curriculums and the importance of a teacher being more than just a conveyor of knowledge?
8. Identify the major events in Mr. Holland's life course as he evolved from musical theorist to applied practitioner.
9. How does Mr. Holland suffer role conflict and role strain in the various responsibilities he fulfills as teacher, father, co-worker, and friend? Provide an example of each.

10. Discuss how education and social life evolved from the initial period when the story begins in the early 1960s to the time when the story concludes some 30 years later. What were some of the driving forces that caused the changes in education, family life, and other social institutions during this period?
11. After Principal Walters cuts art, drama, and music from the school curriculum, Mr. Holland goes to the Board of Education to emphasize the importance of the arts. If a school district found itself in jeopardy of funding today, what would be the alternatives one could expect to be proposed by the Board of Education and school administration?
12. Do you have a legacy you are seeking to fulfill? If so, what is it and what has influenced you to pursue this goal?

Other Films to Consider

Animal House (1978). Every college has one fraternity that stands out. At Faber College it is Delta Chi, a group of zany misfits who at best are gross underachievers and at worse a bunch of immoral, beer-guzzling delinquents. Set in the 60s the movie pokes fun at every popular aspect of college life when taken to extreme. Capitalizing on the time in which it is set, the story line adapts social conditions of the time to give it perspective. Compare situations in your university to those that were depicted in *Animal House*. Are there fraternities and sororities on your campus such as those that exist at Faber? What are some of the issues students deal with at your school that were depicted at Faber? Rated R.

Dead Poets Society (1989). An unorthodox English teacher played by Robin Williams opens the students' minds at a New England prep school. He inspires their love for poetry and an appreciation for intellectual freedom. What are some of the sacrifices students make in pursuit of academic excellence? Why are the innovative methods of learning rejected by the school's administration? What was the most inspirational technique a teacher introduced that motivated you to do better? Rated PG.

Fast Times at Ridgemont High (1982). A newspaper reporter goes undercover to see what high school kids really do and think about. The answer is rather obvious. They hang out at the mall and think about sex. Several actors destined for successful careers make their screen debuts including Nicholas Cage, Forest Whitaker, Eric Stoltz, and Anthony Edwards who are joined by Sean Penn and Jennifer Jason Leigh. How have the topics kids really think about changed over the past twenty years? To what degree is the popular culture of high school kids deviant and dangerous to themselves and others? Rated R.

Higher Learning (1995). Laurence Fishburne plays a political science professor who tries to help a young black athlete (Omar Epps) make sense out of the injustices of society. The turbulence depicted in the fictional college includes date rape, racism, sexism, peer-pressure, drugs, Neo-Nazism, and elitism. Although overwhelming at times, it tries to fit all the stress and pressures faced by new college students into one two-hour flick. Upon arriving at your college

for the first semester of classes, what were some of the fears you had? How did you overcome them? What are some of the injustices you have experienced in college that are similar to those mentioned in the film. Be specific. Rated R.

Lean on Me (1989). *Lean on Me* is the true story of “Crazy” Joe Clark (Morgan Freeman), a controversial, but ultimately successful principal from Patterson High School, New Jersey. Clark uses unorthodox methods, such as carrying a baseball bat and bullhorn to “encourage” students into complying with school policy. The story offers an exploration of the radical, controversial, and ultimately successful overhaul of an inner-city high school that was ravaged by drugs, gangs, and corruption. After viewing *Lean on Me*, assess whether or not “Crazy” Joe Clark’s methods would be effective or even legal today. What strategies would a school use today for a similar situation? Rated PG-13.

Scent of a Woman (1992). Chris O’Donnell plays Charlie, an honest, hardworking, but timid student who finds himself economically outclassed as he attends a high priced east-coast prep school. Charlie finds himself in a precarious situation with the school’s headmaster and his classmates. To his aid comes Al Pacino, a retired, blind Army colonel who exposes the motives of the headmaster and restores dignity to the school. What are the characteristics of the Bard School that distinctly set it apart from a community college or less prestigious university attended by members of the middle class? Why do most of America’s leaders and other members of the power elite come from schools like Bard? Is it a difference in the quality of education? Rated R.

Stand and Deliver (1988). Edward James Olmos plays Jaime Escalante, an electronics engineer who gives up his high paying job in order to take a job as a high school math teacher. He teaches the most disadvantaged students calculus, a course they need to prepare for a state Advanced Placement Test. His genuine dedication to the students turns their lives around. What does this film say about the ability of students and the quality of teaching prior to Escalante’s arrival? Why were his methods successful when the methods employed by more traditional teachers failed to motivate the students to learn? Consider the role of education in the lives of young Americans. In the movie, did you see evidence of a commitment to mass education, or evidence of a utilitarian institution designed to control and accredit students? Examine the formal structure of the school as depicted in the film, and give examples of both the latent and manifest functions of the school system. Rated PG.

The Paper Chase (1973). John Houseman is Kingsfield, an unbending, callous, insensitive professor at Harvard Law School. Timothy Bottoms plays an aspiring freshman in Kingsfield’s class who deals with the adversity of the professor while trying to maintain a social life that includes dating his daughter. The plot of the movie focuses on the obsession over achievers can place on grades. What are some of the sacrifices students make in pursuit of academic excellence? What are some of the disturbing ramifications of setting unattainable goals? What are the lessons to be learned about this situation? Rated PG.

Chapter Fourteen

Healthcare and Medicine

Outbreak (1995)

Major Application: Healthcare and Medicine

Secondary Applications: Political Systems, Collective Behavior and Social Change, Human Ecology and the Environment, Technology and Social Change

Major Characters: Dustin Hoffman as Colonel Sam Daniels, an Army virologist in charge of a military biological unit
Rene Russo as Dr. Robby Keough, ex-wife of Colonel Daniels and a civilian employee of the Center for Disease Control
Cuba Gooding Jr. as Major Salt, a member of Colonel Daniels' team
Morgan Freeman as General Billy Ford, second in command of the military germ warfare unit
Donald Sutherland as Major General Donald McClintock, the head of the military germ warfare unit
Kevin Spacey as Major Casey Schuler, close friend of Daniels and Keough and a member of Col. Daniels' team

MPAA Rating: R Language

Synopsis of Film: A deadly virus with a mortality rate of 100% infects an entire west coast community and a number of people in Boston. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) is in a frenzy to find answers as well as a cure for this killer virus. It has the potential to spell the doom of mankind as surely as an exchange of thermo-nuclear weapons between warring super powers. Countering the efforts of the CDC are two high ranking Army officers who had experienced the affects of this virus thirty years earlier. In an attempt to keep their knowledge of the virus a well-kept military secret, the senior officer, (Donald Sutherland) seeks to sacrifice a community of 2600 infected with the virus, as well as one of his top virologists (Dustin Hoffman) and his team.

The film illustrates the danger viral infections can pose and how they can be transported quickly and without warning. It also provides insight into the role sociologists can play in the medical field as researchers and caseworkers working in concert with medical personnel.

Exercises and Questions

1. In the opening of the film is a quote by Joshua Lederberg, "The single biggest threat to man's continued dominance on the planet is the virus". Why is the virus mightier than the bomb in spelling the potential doom of mankind?
2. The virus was first discovered in a mercenary camp in central Africa. Why was it called Motaba? Can you identify any other discoveries named for the region from which they originated?

3. Early in the film, Robby (Rene Russo) informs Sam (Dustin Hoffman), of the reasons why she is going to work for the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and how it is different from his work as a military virologist. What are some of these differences? Are there others that Robby does not mention? In the event of a national state of emergency such as the one displayed in the film, would the CDC or military have the best chance to effectively deal with the situation? Why?
4. What role do sociologists play in medical research, the delivery of health care systems, and in dealing with national emergencies such as the one depicted in the film? What courses, both in sociology and related disciplines, would be helpful for a student to complete who was interested in a career in medical sociology?
5. What is a carrier and what is a host as it relates to transmitting disease?
6. How did the tribal witch doctor use symbolic interactionism to explain the disease in his village?
7. How did the disease get spread from Africa to the United States? Why did it spread so quickly?
8. What was the major “advantage” of the deadliness of the virus?
9. How does the film demonstrate the need for strict policies by the Customs Service and a need for dedicated Customs employees who are above corruption?
10. What are the similarities between the spread of Motaba in this film and the spread of the HIV virus in the late 1970s and early 80s?
11. How do the outbreak of Motaba, as well as the development of the HIV virus both serve as positive checks to curb population growth based on the Malthus Theorem as formulated in 1798? What is the significance of the fictional Motaba and real-life HIV both originating in Africa?
12. What are the political, social, and military ramifications of an outbreak of a killer virus as illustrated in this film?

A Beautiful Mind (2001)

Major Application: Healthcare and Medicine

Secondary Applications: Society and Social Groups, Socialization and the Life Course, Deviance and Social Control, Education and Society, Technology, Collective Behavior and Social Change

Major Characters: Russell Crowe as John Nash
Ed Harris as government agent William Parcher
Jennifer Connelly as Alicia Larde Nash
Christopher Plummer as Dr. Rosen
Paul Bettany as Charles Herman
Adam Goldberg as Sol
Judd Hirsch as Professor Helinger

MPAA Rating: PG-13 Intense thematic material, sexual content, and a scene of violence

Synopsis of Film: John Nash (Russell Crowe) is a brilliant, but asocial mathematician. As a graduate student at Princeton University, Nash finds it difficult to adjust to the routine of classes. He also finds it difficult to make friends or develop social relationships. But through a stroke of genius, he revises Adam Smith's Law of Governing Dynamics which catapults him to the top of his class. Following the successful pursuit of his doctorate, Nash believes he is recruited by government agent William Parcher (Ed Harris) to complete top secret work in cryptography. Nash accepts the assignment and embarks on a dual career, one as a top academician and the other performing top secret work for the government. In his professorial work he develops a love relationship with one of his students, Alicia Larde (Jennifer Connelly) which leads to marriage and a family.

The stress of working at the Wheeler Defense Laboratory at MIT, conducting his top secret cryptography work, guest lecturing, and raising a family takes a tremendous toll on Nash which leads to a total mental collapse. Diagnosed with schizophrenia, it is discovered that his cryptography work, William Parcher, and all the personnel associated with it have been delusions. His roommate at Princeton, Charles Herman (Paul Bettany) was also a figment of Nash's imagination.

Nash receives intensive treatment at McCarthy Psychiatric Hospital that includes electroshock therapy, drug therapy, and counseling and after several months of treatment returns home under his wife's care. His road to recovery requires several additional years of therapy and Nash suffers a relapse when he stops taking his medication. He eventually returns to Princeton as a professor of mathematics and goes on to continue a brilliant career.

Exercises and Questions

1. When does John Nash (Russell Crowe) first begin to experience delusions? Why did he not seek treatment at that time? Why weren't his fellow students aware of his problem?
2. Why were the hallucinations Nash was experiencing believable to him, as they are believable to the viewer of the film prior to discovering Nash's mental illness?
3. Is this story an example of the medicalization of deviance? Why or why not?

4. What are the side effects of Nash's treatment? Based on his transformation from being a brilliant college professor to a recovering schizophrenic, would you consider "the cure worse than the disease?" Justify your answer.
5. At the beginning of the film, Nash is described by one of his fellow students as "the mysterious West Virginia genius." Nash later states, "The truth is I don't like people much...and they don't much like me." When asked why he wasn't attending class, Nash responded, "Classes will dull your mind and destroy the potential for authentic creativity." Where does one draw the line between simply be asocial or a recluse and being mentally ill? When did Nash cross the line?
6. What are some of the behaviors exhibited by brilliant people that could be mistaken as signs of just eccentric when in fact they are signs of a mental illness? What were some of the signs Nash exhibited?
7. As Nash's schizophrenia becomes worse, why is family, especially his wife, endangered by his behavior?
8. What is the toll that mental has on family members, especially a spouse who is responsible for the care and treatment of the mentally ill person?
9. How important are Durkheim's concepts of social solidarity and the social imperative in maintaining positive mental health?
10. Research the topic of schizophrenia and provide a profile of the extent of the illness, the characteristics of those most likely to be afflicted with it, and the treatment.

Other Films to Consider

Awakenings (1990). Robin Williams plays Dr. Malcolm Sayer who is seeking an effective drug to treat Parkinson's disease. An extraneous theme to this excellent depiction of a true incident is the actual experiment, using increased quantities of a new drug as the variable, which produced astounding results. Robert DiNero plays a patient who is awakened after being in a coma for 30 years and enjoys life as an adult for the first time. What research methods does Sayer use in his efforts to find an effective drug? What aspects of Sayer's research would a sociologist be able to assist? Rated R.

ER: The Series Premiere (1995). Perhaps the most watched medical drama made for TV, this pilot for the series offers a brilliantly realistic recreation of the stress and trauma associated with saving lives in a big city emergency room. Good acting, dramatic plots, and believable story lines full of human interest have preserved this as a long running series that will live for years in syndication. For the purposes of the recommended essays and discussion, other episodes of the series may be substituted with a little adjustment. How does sociology enter into medicine? How does the hospital setting in *ER* differ from what it would have been 50 years ago? Is the setting

used in the movie or episode viewed representative of an actual emergency room today? Not Rated. Made for TV.

Medicine Man (1992). Sean Connery discovers a cure for cancer as he conducts research in the Brazilian rain forest. Unfortunately, he cannot duplicate it. How does social research become as important as the medical research illustrated in the film? Explain how this teamwork between the two sciences is necessary in other research using a specific issue or disease as an example. How does the film illustrate the need to protect the environment? How does the presence of disease actually support society? Be creative and take this thought to the extreme examining what Malthus added on preventive and positive checks on population growth. Rated PG-13.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975). This film is a four-star classic starring Jack Nicholson, Danny DiVito, and Christopher Lloyd as they were establishing themselves as Hollywood icons. In one respect the story is quite disturbing as it portrays a sane convict who is admitted to a mental ward as punishment for being an incorrigible troublemaker. On the other hand, it symbolizes the triumph of a person with no prior medical training who inspires his fellow patients to assert themselves. A frustrated and strong-willed head nurse played by Louise Fletcher becomes Nicholson's personal nemesis when she realizes she has lost control of her ward. The film won all five top Oscars in 1975. Why do the patients apparently respond better to the social therapy orchestrated by McMurphy (Jack Nicholson) than the drug and talk therapy offered by Nurse Ratched (Louise Fletcher)? Would all mental patients have a similar benefit to this method of therapy? Why or why not? How does the film illustrate the medicalization of deviance? Rated R.

Patch Adams (1998). Robin Williams plays Patch Adams, a doctor who throws out the medical manuals in favor of treating patients like people. His unorthodox methods create problems for him, but they also help reach people who would have otherwise given up hope. Based on a true story, the plot is somewhat exaggerated from the actual accounts of what transpired in this tale of good Samaritanship. Nonetheless, it is inspirational for anyone who must deal with others in bureaucratic institutions. How is symbolic interactionism used in regards to the doctor-patient relationship as well as the other symbols we associate with the medical field, such as hospitals, white coats, titles, prescriptions, and so on? Compare and contrast *The Doctor* with *Patch Adams* in this regard. Rated PG-13.

Philadelphia (1993). Several different plots make *Philadelphia* an excellent choice for discussion. Tom Hanks won an Oscar for his portrayal of an aspiring young attorney who is fired for bogus reasons by his Mainline Philadelphia law firm after he contracts the HIV virus. In the process of looking for a lawyer to represent him, he is forced to choose Denzel Washington, a man who dislikes gays. The story addresses several different issues including homophobia, how Hanks deals with his HIV infection and pending death, the power of the bureaucracy, and equal treatment of the sick and infirmed. Based on your viewing of *Philadelphia*, consider whether the HIV virus, based upon what we know about it from medical research, is dangerous enough to constitute a contagious disease concern in the workplace. Should there be mandatory testing of high-risk people for the disease? If you answer yes, define "high-risk people" and the issues associated with "mandatory" testing. If you answer "no", defend your answer. Rated PG-13.

The Doctor (1991). Considered as a “must-see” for anyone wishing to enter the medical profession, this film is based on a true story. A doctor finds out his sore throat is actually cancer which mandates the cranky, callous, and insensitive doctor must unwillingly become a patient. He finds out what it is like to be subjected to the impersonal, dehumanizing treatment of an overburdened medical system. How is symbolic interactionsim used in regards to the doctor-patient relationship as well as the other symbols we associate with the medical field, such as hospitals, white coats, titles, prescriptions, and so on. Compare and contrast *The Doctor* with *Patch Adams* in this regard. Rated PG-13.

Chapter Fifteen Political Systems

All Quiet on the Western Front (1934)

Major Application: Political Systems

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Culture, Socialization and the Life Course, Deviance and Social Control, Age and Society, Collective Behavior and Social Change, Technology and Social Change.

Major Characters: Lewis Ayers as Paul, the idealistic student
Louis Wolheim as Kat, the veteran soldier who Paul befriends
John Wray as Himmelstoss, the training sergeant
Arnold Lucy as Kantorek, Paul's classmate and fellow soldier
Ben Alexander as Kemmerich, Paul's classmate and fellow soldier
Scott Kolk as Leer, Paul's classmate and fellow soldier
Owen Davis Jr. as Peter, Paul's classmate and fellow soldier
Beryl Mercer as Paul's Mother
Edmund Breese as Herr Meyer, the school master

MPAA Rating: Not Rated Violence

Synopsis of Film: Based on an anti-war novel by Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front* has lost little in its original impact since its release in 1934. Even today, the 1934 film and its many remakes are banned from being shown in nations mobilizing for war. The plot follows a group of young German recruits in World War I through their passage from idealism to disillusionment.

After receiving a dramatic and inspiring speech from their school master, Paul, Kat, and his other classmates enthusiastically and proudly join the German army. With a blinded patriotism, each member of the class has their own vision of valor and fame. But they soon discover the training to become a combat soldier is a pain-staking, miserable experience considerably superceded by the actual combat experience. One by one, the members of the class are lost.

When Paul is granted leave, he visits his concerned mother to discover the world as he knew it has changed considerably. When he visits his old school, he is proudly introduced by Herr Meyer, his former teacher. But in response, Paul gives the class a realistic and sobering account of what war means to the soldier in the trenches.

All Quiet on the Western Front has had several remakes, all of which follow the same basic script. Any of these can be used to answer the questions with slight modification. The 1934 version is considered a classic and won the Academy Award that year for Best Picture.

Exercises and Questions

1. Why is this story “neither an accusation, a confession, or an adventure” as indicated in the opening passage? What can be said about current world conflicts as being similar as well as different from World War I?
2. At the beginning of the film, Herr Meyer, Himmelstoss, and the postman all believe the war will be over shortly. What are some of the political advantages for the government to lead the public to believe this? What are some of the practical reasons why the public accepts this as being true?
3. What do events such as the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941 and the destruction of the World Trade Towers in 2001 have in common as being encouragements for young men and women to want to join the armed forces and become members of combat units? How is this similar and different from the manner in which World War I began and what was the actual impetus for the classmates to join the service?
4. Why is the school teacher an inspiration to his students? Based on the content of his speech, why does he emphasize military service so strongly? As he makes his speech, the film shows a young man coming home in uniform to surprise his parents that he has joined the army. Why is the mother devastated and the father so proud? What relevance does this scene have on gender identity, rites of passage, and the socialization process?
5. Other than military service, what are some other options available to a young man or young woman today who wish to serve their country? Why didn't Herr Meyer mention these?
6. With the emphasis on women's rights and equal opportunity, should women be subject to the draft as well as training in the infantry? Does the difference between warfare as depicted in this film and warfare today enter into your answer? Why?
7. After their feast of beans, bread, and sausage after a major battle the men of the company discuss how a war begins. What lessons can be learned from their comments that include, “One country offends another...one people offends another,” “Neither the Kaiser or me wanted this war...maybe it was the English,” “It (the war) must be doing somebody some good.... maybe the Kaiser wanted the war...he never had a war before...every emperor and general needs a war to make him famous,” “the manufacturers get rich.”
8. After visiting Kemmerich at the aid station, how do the classmates change their opinion of the war effort? Why? What is the added significance of Kemmerich losing his leg?
9. How does the concept of ethnocentrism play a positive as well as negative influence upon the recruits, their school master, other soldiers, and public? When do Paul and his classmates begin to show signs of cultural relativism?

10. After Paul kills the French soldier in the crater, why does the war become a more personal effort?. What significance is there in Paul's comment directed to the dead Frenchman, "Why did they do this to us...we only wanted to live you and I...if we threw away these rifles and these uniforms you could be my brother." How can Paul kill other Frenchmen after making such a heartfelt apology to this one for killing him?
11. Upon returning home on leave, Paul's mother tells him "Paul, you're a soldier now... somehow I don't seem to know you." What causes her to feel this way? Do you think Paul may feel this way about himself? Why? How has Paul's attitude towards the school master changed after serving at the front? For being so much against the war, why does Paul return to the front early? What lessons can be learned from Paul's conversation with Kat when he returned to the front?
12. How does *All Quiet on the Western Front* illustrate the concepts of structural functionalism, the conflict perspective, and symbolic interactionism?

***Thirteen Days* (2000)**

Major Application: Political Systems

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Technology, Collective Behavior and Social Change, Human Ecology and the Environment. Technology and Social Change

Major Characters: Kevin Costner as Kenneth P. O'Donnell, Special Assistant to President John F. Kennedy
 Bruce Greenwood as President John F. Kennedy
 Steven Culp as Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy
 Dylan Baker as Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara
 Michael Fairman as Adlai Stevenson, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations
 Henry Stozier as Dan Rusk, Secretary of State
 Frank Wood as McGeorge Bundy, National Security Advisor
 Kevin Conway as General Curtis LeMay, Air Force Chief of Staff
 Bill Smitrovich as General Maxwell D. Taylor, Charman, Joint Chief of Staff

MPAA Rating: PG-13 Brief strong language

Synopsis of Film: *Thirteen Days* is a film based on the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 when the world came dangerously close to nuclear annihilation. As Special Assistant to President John F. Kennedy, Kenneth P. O'Donnell (Kevin Costner) provides as insider's view to the intense working of the government's top leaders during a period of crisis. Although Costner's role is fictional, the story line is based on fact.

When a U-2 spy plane discovers offensive nuclear missiles being assembled in Cuba, the United States is placed in peril of suffering a pre-emptive nuclear strike from the Soviets that would have virtually no forewarning. President John F. Kennedy calls together his inner circle of statesmen, advisors, and generals to analyze, contain, and counter this incredibly real threat to every American and the nation as we know it.

The film illustrates the multi-faceted difficulties faced by a major leader during a time of crisis. President Kennedy had to deal with the distant and faceless threat of the Russian bureaucracy, the puppet government of Cuba, multiple and conflicting options offered by his closest advisors, the special interests of the military and intelligence community, and the popular opinion of the American people.

At the core of this film are studies of the paralyzing effects of power and the stark horror of mutually assured destruction. In its final analysis, it is a tribute to the use of reason over hotheadedness, negotiation over military might, and peace over war.

Exercises and Questions

1. As Kenny O'Donnell enters the White House to speak to the President, he passes Jackie who is disappointed over O'Donnell's disapproval of guests she is inviting to a party. O'Donnell responds to Jackie, "It's a party to you...politics to me." How does this focus on politics by O'Donnell become a part of bureaucratic ritualism? What are some of the potential results of such a practice?
2. When holding the initial discussion following the discovery of the missiles, two distinct teams appear to emerge...one headed by Generals Maxwell Taylor and Curtis LeMay and the other by Secretary of State Dean Rusk. How do these two groups employ the concept of group polarization as they discuss their options?
3. What leadership style does President Kennedy demonstrate at the initial meetings with his staff? How is his leadership style similar and different from that of Bobby Kennedy as he leads the meeting of the inner circle trying to come to a consensus on their course of action?
4. How is group polarization demonstrated in the film?
5. Is group think a part of the planning on how to respond to the threat of nuclear missiles in Cuba? If so, by which groups and why?
6. Why does General LeMay feel bombing Cuba is "the only course of action" when asked by President Kennedy what is the best course of action? How does LeMay's characterization of the situation as "the Big Red Dog is digging in our back yard and we are justified in shooting him" illustrate the concept of ethnocentrism and in-group/out-group relationships?
7. What is the rational explanation for LeMay's point of view?

Other Films to Consider

Bulworth (1998). Warren Beatty directs and stars in this audacious political satire about a California Senator running for re-election in 1996. He solves his personal crisis of conscience by telling the truth that embraces his constituency. The movie is unsettling at times with trenchant observations on the political process and the plight of the poor. How do the re-election tactics of *Bulworth* compare to the re-election strategies of national politicians? Compare *Bulworth* to the presidency of William Jefferson Clinton. How do you think the scandals that plagued Clinton would have turned out if he actually told the truth (or at least what many people believe to have been the truth)? Rated R.

Casablanca (1942). A four-star classic starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman set in war torn Morocco. Claude Rains plays the dapper police chief. The plot features a group of people trying to get out of Morocco, a beautiful country ripped apart by Gestapo occupation. Once nominated as the best Hollywood movie of all time. What is the type of government under which the residents of Morocco live? Why is this type of government ineffective in Morocco, but was highly successful in Germany? Not Rated.

Conspiracy Theory (1997). Jerry Fletcher (Mel Gibson) is a New York City cab driver and conspiracy buff. He uses an assortment of resources and methods to investigate his personal theories on government activity and publishes them in his own newsletter. One of Jerry's theories hits too close to revealing a true government conspiracy that results in the efforts of a radical government agency to silence him. What service do the Jerry Fletchers provide for a free society? What is the practical limit to pursuing leads such as that which Jerry has followed? Can you identify any similar conspiracies for which the government is accused of today? Rated R.

Crimson Tide (1995). Produced and directed by the same duo that brought *Top Gun* to the silver screen, the two Hollywood masters take their talents beneath the sea in a macho power-play saga aboard a Navy nuclear submarine. Tensions run high when the United States is pushed to the brink of war with Russia, especially when veteran submarine commander, Captain Frank Ramsey (Gene Hackman) starts showing Captain Queeg tendencies and his new executive officer, Lt. Commander Ron Hunter (Denzel Washington) tries to assert himself. The film vividly illustrates a "what if" scenario and raises the question of how plausible is the plot. What qualities led to Captain Ramsey's (Hackman) obsession with firing the missiles? What qualities led to Commander Hunter's (Washington) trying to stop him? How has this scenario changed and remained the same in regards to international politics today? Rated R.

Dr. Strangelove (1964). Directed by Stanley Kubrick, this British made picture uses a wide range of American talent including George C. Scott, James Earl Jones, and Slim Pickens. A fanatical general launches a nuclear attack against the Soviet Union. The plot appears to be foiled and order is restored except SAC can't account for one B-52, piloted by Slim Pickens. The black humor of the plot can be quite sobering, especially because the Soviets once discussed the potential to build such a "Doomsday Device" as depicted in the film. In *Dr. Strangelove*, how does the possibility of mutually assured destruction affect the Americans and the Soviets? What are the ideologies presented by each government in response to that possibility? Is Slim Pickens obsessed with completing his mission or just dropping his nuclear bomb? How does *Crimson*

Tide compare to *Dr. Strangelove* in motive and plot? Why is the captain of the *Alabama* stopped from delivering his nuclear weapons but Slim Pickens succeeds? Not Rated.

Enemy of the State (1998). A Washington DC lawyer (Will Smith) reluctantly takes on the government bureaucracy to save his reputation and family and to avenge the murder of his former paramour. The film provides insight into how big Big Brother can be and the power of the government bureaucracy. How is the scenario in *Enemy of the State* that relates to the passage of the security act similar to the passage of the Patriot Act following the bombing of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001? If there was a Patriot Act as suggested in the film in effect prior to 9-11, do you think the incident would have still occurred or would it have been discovered? What are your personal feelings regarding the Patriot Act. Rated R.

JFK (1991). Directed by Oliver Stone, the film takes a number of liberties in suggesting conspiracy theories to explain the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Presented as an account of New Orleans District Attorney James Garrison's obsession with the assassination, Stone may have gone too far in planting facts to support his theories. Not be confused with being a documentary, the film certainly presents the core of the sociological imagination in suggesting all Americans continue to "ask questions and question answers" regarding the tragic death of this beloved president. Why are many people inclined to believe conspiracy theories related to the assassination? What are the most recent discoveries in the JFK assassination that continue to fuel this conspiracy? Is it possible that the truth about the assassination may be more damning than the American people could accept? Explain your answer. Rated R.

The Patriot (2000). Benjamin Martin (Mel Gibson) is The Patriot, a reluctant hero who is swept into the American Revolution when the war reaches his home and threatens his family. Now a man of peace, Martin has already witnessed the horrors of war in the French and Indian conflicts in the prior decade. How does *The Patriot* compare to *All Quiet on the Western Front* in respect to the reasons each group goes to war? What are the underlying reasons why each group chose war as the option to deal with their situation? Why were the Americans successful in their fight against the British but the Germans were not in their efforts during World War I? Rated R.

Chapter Sixteen

Economic Systems

Wall Street (1987)

Major Application: Economic Systems

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Culture, Social Stratification, Deviance and Social Control, Technology and Social Change

Major Characters: Charlie Sheen as Bud Fox, an ambitious rookie stockbroker
Tamara Tunie as Carolyn
Franklin Cover as Dan
Chuck Pfeiffer as Chuckie
John C. McGinley as Marvin
Hal Holbrook as Lou Mannheim, a legitimate veteran stockbroker
James Karen as Lynch
Leslie Lyles as Natalie
Michael Douglas as Gordon Gekko, a deceitful and successful superbroker
Martin Sheen as Carl Fox, Bud's father who is a union leader
Daryl Hannah as Darlen Taylor, Bud's upscale girlfriend
Terrence Stamp as Sir Larry Wildman, a broker who is Gekko's nemesis

MPAA Rating: R Harsh language, suggested sexuality

Synopsis of Film: Charlie Sheen is Bud Fox, an ambitious rookie stockbroker from a blue-collar background who is magnetized by Gordon Gekko (Michael Douglas), a superbroker who specializes in corporate takeovers. Despite his initial resistance to Bud's entreaties, Gekko finally takes on the aspiring Fox as his protégé, teaching him the devious, unethical, and corrupt ways that have made him a success. Fox favors this modified method of maneuvering over the slower, less effective principled approach to investing that is advocated by veteran stockbroker Lou Mannheim (Hal Holbrook). Sheen becomes caught in the middle of a struggle to achieve wealth and power at the expense of breaking the law and becoming a clone of Gekko. Bud's success with Gekko allows him to move into a luxury apartment and he develops a love interest with a fickle but beautiful woman, interior designer Darlen Taylor (Daryl Hannah). But is the cost of this success more than he is willing to pay? The final straw that makes Bud reconsider his efforts is when Gekko solicits Bud to betray his father, union leader Carl Fox (Martin Sheen). This would also jeopardize the jobs and lives of many members of his family and friends. In the end, Bud discovers his conscience and Gekko gets his due. As he has the final conflict with Gekko, Fox tells Gekko, "I may never be a Gekko, but I'll always be Bud Fox". The price Fox pays to find himself is unclear, but the film alludes to jail time.

When watching the film, the viewer needs to recognize the cash figures are based on 1985 values when the storyline takes place. For example, Bud tells his father he made \$50,000 last year while the father made \$42,000. Gekko gives Bud a check for one million dollars to invest in his behalf. These figures would be nearly doubled at the rate of inflation between 1985 and today. A final

issue, which would only be picked up by the most astute movie viewer, is that Bud makes reference to the Challenger disaster, which in 1985 had not yet occurred.

With the news of Ken Ley, Enron, Martha Stewart, and corporate greed being common headlines over the past several years, *Wall Street* was ahead of its time, having been released in 1987.

Exercises and Questions

1. Describe the material and non-material culture that is illustrated in the opening scenes of the film as Bud Fox reports for work.
2. In the opening scenes, Lou Mannheim (Hal Holbrook), the manager of the stockbroker firm, tells his account supervisors “stick to the fundamentals....good things sometime take time.” How does this compare to the motto Gekko (Michael Douglas) would embrace? Compare and contrast the similarities and differences between Mannheim and Gekko in their personal and professional lifestyles.
3. During the course of the film, identifies examples of role strain and role conflict that Bud Fox experiences.
4. How is *Wall Street* an example of the capitalist economy and the antithesis of the socialist economy?
5. In one of his discussions with Gekko, Bud Fox states, “There is no nobility in poverty anymore.” Explain how poverty equates to nobility in the reference to which Fox uses it.
6. What are the costs of success that Gekko must pay in his efforts to be a superbroker? What were the benefits? Do an analysis of both and come to a conclusion if the cost was worth the benefit. Make a similar comparison for Bud Fox, noting how his cost/benefit analysis was both similar and different from Gekko’s.
7. What are the social relationships that Bud has at his firm and those he develops with Gekko. Describe each relationship he has in the film and classify it as being either a primary or secondary relationship and how these relationships change during the course of the film.
8. Identify the various social classes illustrated in the movie and how the value system of each class is similar and different.
9. Describe what Gekko meant when he said, “Every battle is won before it is fought.”
10. There are a number of cases over the past twenty years (Ivan Boesky, Michael Milligan, Ken Ley, Martha Stewart, and others) that have embraced the concept that “Greed is good.” Develop an essay that can support or condemn this value. Is greed necessary for success in the business community?

Other Films to Consider

Down and Out in Beverly Hills (1986). Rescued from drowning in the swimming pool of a *nouveau riche* neurotic Beverly Hills couple (Richard Dreyfuss and Bette Midler), a disconsolate bum (Nick Nolte) brings startling changes to the entire household. While doing so, Dreyfuss and Midler do about faces of their attitudes towards the poor. Identify the social classes that are illustrated by the major characters in the film and their personal characteristics. How does the existence of a poor person in the neighborhood benefit Dreyfuss and Midler? What are the functional benefits of poverty to society? Rated R.

Enemy at the Gates (2001). A Russian sharpshooter is built up to be a hero to bolster his country's morale during the intense days of the Battle of Stalingrad. As a result, the Germans send their top marksman (Ed Harris) to pick him off, leading to a deadly battle of wits. The background in which the story is set illustrates the differences in socio-economic class of the characters and the impact of total government control on the people. Based on a true story, there is a degree of Hollywood that compromises the film's historical value. Describe the differences between the two political systems illustrated in the film and how they affect the economics of each regime. In *Enemy at the Gates*, why does the German army have the initial advantage at the Battle of Stalingrad only to lose it to the much less prepared and poorly armed Soviet forces? What are some elements of industrialization that impacted the failure of the German army and the success of the Soviets? Rated R.

Hoffa (1992). Jack Nicholson plays Jimmy Hoffa and Danny DiVito plays his right hand man in this convincing re-enactment of the life and presumed death of one of America's most well known labor leaders. The development of the Teamsters and its tremendous influence are illustrated very well, as in a plausible account of Hoffa's demise. How does this film illustrate the underground economy and how organized crime infiltrates and dominates legitimate businesses? Rated R.

Norma Rae (1979). Sally Field plays a real-life Southern textile worker who organizes factory workers into unionization. The factory's environment includes a number of intolerable conditions. Her mother has gone deaf from the machinery noise, which is just one example. Field won an Oscar for her performance. After viewing *Norma Rae* and *Hoffa*, what were the alternatives to Norma Rae if she did not organize the textile workers? How do her efforts compare and contrast to the efforts of Jimmy Hoffa in organizing the teamsters? Rated PG.

Original Gangstas (1996). A comfortable blue-collar neighborhood is turned into an urban battleground when street gangs become the dominant force in a survival of the fittest environment. The decline of the city is caused by the loss of the steel industry. Although the plot is a bit far fetched in regards to its plausibility and execution, the background used that includes the dismantling of America's steel industry, the rise of urban violence, and breakdown of family values is a sobering account of conditions in certain sections of the inner city. After watching *Original Gangstas*, describe the cultural context in which the poor live. What are their norms, values, beliefs, and mores? What are some of the material culture items on which they depend? How are their attitudes and beliefs different as well as similar to the more wealthy members of society they are compared to in the movie used? Rated R.

Roger and Me (1989). This funny, but incisive documentary depicts the lives of laid-off auto industry workers in Flint, Michigan, and the transformation of a solid working class town into a ghetto. The director relentlessly interviews people being evicted, the sheriff who evicts them, the desperate “rabbit lady” who raises bunnies for pelts and meat, all in an attempt to meet the Chairman of General Motors to ask him how such a thing could happen. Based upon your viewing of *Roger and Me* consider the realities of working in a capitalist economy. What are the importance of market demands, foreign competition, and profit margins as they relate to the decision to order massive layoffs? Should General Motors be responsible for the people who devoted their lives to the company, only to be left destitute and homeless? Based on the information in your textbook and other sources, do you think the same situation could happen in Japan? Why or why not? Rated R.

The Grapes of Wrath (1940). This old classic is unmatched in depicting the poverty experienced by migrants seeking to escape the Oklahoma Dust Bowl of the Depression era. Families travel across country with all they own in hopes of finding a better life in California where they only encounter prejudice and violence. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, the migrants have lost almost everything they own and are truly disadvantaged. How is their plight similar and different than that of people born into poverty in the inner city and other environments? Does the “culture of poverty” as defined by Oscar Lewis apply to the disadvantaged migrants in this film? Why or why not? Not Rated.

Chapter Seventeen Collective Behavior and Social Change

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975)

Major Application: Collective Behavior and Social Change

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Culture, Society and Social Groups, Deviance and Social Control, Social Stratification, Healthcare and Medicine

Major Characters: Jack Nicholson as Randle Patrick McMurphy
Louise Fletcher as Nurse Mildred Ratched
William Redfield as Harding
Will Sampson as Chief
Dean R. Brooks as Dr. John Spivey
Danny DeVito as Martini
Christopher Lloyd as Tabor
Nathan George as Attendant Washington
Mwako Cumbuka as Attendant Warren
Land Fendors as Nurse Itsu

MPAA Rating: (Not Rated) Harsh language, suggested sexuality

Synopsis of Film: Randle Patrick McMurphy (Jack Nicholson) is a behavior problem in a penal facility sent to a mental hospital for a psychiatric evaluation. McMurphy feigns being mentally ill in order to escape the constraint of the penal facility, but finds Nurse Ratched (Louise Fletcher) to be a more dangerous adversary than any prison guard he has encountered. McMurphy quickly establishes a leadership position among the mental patients and introduces them to a number of activities outlawed by the hospital. He commandeers a bus to take the ward on a fishing trip, establishes evening poker games in which he relieves most of the players of their cigarettes which are used for currency, and throws a party for the ward that includes two hookers and a lavish supply of liquor.

McMurphy's addition to the ward creates social change that threatens the order of the authority of the head nurse, Mildred Ratched. At the same time it helps several of the patients to deal more effectively with their personal problems. McMurphy's addition of various recreational activities to the patient's treatment modalities would be unthinkable by the professional staff.

During the ward party McMurphy arranges, a soft spoken and timid patient, Billy, has sex with one of the hookers attending the party. The experience brings Billy out of his shell, but when Nurse Ratched discovers it, she severely chastises him and threatens to tell his mother about the incident. Embarrassed and ashamed, Billy commits suicide. This results in McMurphy physically attacking Ratched. Afterwards, the medical staff performs a prefrontal lobotomy on Murphy as the last resort to curb his aggressive tendencies.

Exercises and Questions

1. How do the patients at the hospital qualify as a collective? as a social group?
2. How do the nurses and other professional staff qualify as a collective? as a social group? Together would both the patients and staff qualify as both a collective and a social group? Why or why not?
3. What routines are illustrated by the hospital staff and patients? How do these routines inhibit as well as encourage the behavior and treatment of the patients?
4. How is social stratification illustrated in the film? Identify the various categories illustrated in the film and the characteristics of each.
5. How does the mental hospital qualify as a total institution? Be specific as to the characteristics cited.
6. What theory of collective behavior best describes McMurphy's affect on the patients in the ward?
7. Why type of leadership style does McMurphy display in his organization of the inmates? What is Nurse Ratched's style of leadership? In this environment, would other leadership styles have been effective for either McMurphy or Nurse Ratched for the positions they occupied?
8. How does the group change in its solidarity between the first group session attended by McMurphy and the end of the film?
9. Why was it mandatory for Nurse Ratched to challenge McMurphy's influence over the group?
10. What theory of collective behavior best describes the incident where Mr. Cheswick wants his cigarettes and the group's harassment of Mr. Hardy that leads to a near riot and the electroshock therapy used on McMurphy, Chief, and Cheswick?

Other Films to Consider

All Quiet on the Western Front (1930). Lew Ayers and his classmates are naïve schoolboys overcome by the hype of their schoolmaster to join the German army in WWI and proudly serve their homeland. The story that unfolds is moving and vivid, serving as a master example of why we should “give peace a chance”. Made over 70 years ago and depicting a war that began nearly a century ago, *All Quiet on the Western Front* has not lost its power or poignancy in driving its point home on the horrors of war. The film won an Oscar for Best Picture in 1930. In *All Quiet on the Western Front*, what theory of collective behavior best explains the obsession developed by the young German schoolboys for the war? How could the schoolmaster have served as an

instrument for the failure of the war movement without appearing to be a traitor or unpatriotic? Do the citizens of a country “owe” their nation a period of service whether it is in the military service, Peace Corp, or Vista? What if nobody volunteered for these programs? What are your views of being drafted for them? Not Rated.

American Graffiti (1973). A high school class of young men and women with distinctly different interests come of age following graduation from high school in the early 60's. The fads of the time period are well illustrated, as well as insight into the reasons for the collective behavior of the time. Directed by George Lucas, *American Graffiti* featured a cast of aspiring young actors including Richard Dreyfuss, Harrison Ford, Ron Howard, Cindy Williams, and Mackenzie Phillips. In *American Graffiti*, what fads of the early 60's are depicted in the film? Have any of these become fashionable and are still in existence today? How were they modified through time? Why have some of the fads, such as drive-in theaters, evaporated from the American culture? Rated PG.

Braveheart (1995). This big booming, epic tale of 13th-century Scottish rebel warrior William Wallace re-enacts the grass roots resistance to the tyranny of English King Edward I. A gripping personal story grows along with escalating battle scenes. Wallace single-handedly unites the Scots and leads them to freedom from oppression. The movie won five Academy Awards including Best Picture. After viewing *Braveheart*, describe the importance of a charismatic leader to the success of a social movement. What are the major contributions Wallace makes to the cause? What tactics does he use to gain the emotional and personal support of the group? How can this type of leadership be a problem for a social movement as well as an asset? Rated R.

Good Morning Vietnam (1987). Robin Williams is Adrian Cronauer, a slaphappy military misfit assigned to Armed Forces radio in war torn Saigon as a disc jockey. The story is a paradox of story line. On one hand, it is a hilarious comedy and on the other an account of the horrific reality of the war. As he learns more about the people of Saigon, Cronauer begins to understand the war from a perspective not afforded most of his military peers, especially the ones in charge. After watching *Good Morning Vietnam*, describe how the Vietnam War was a social movement by the Vietnamese people. What type of movement was it? How did the politics associated with the movement affect its image to the American people? Note that Ho Chi Minh tried to gain American support for a free Vietnam several times between 1920 and into the 1950's. America rejected this request in favor of supporting France that had taken a colonial presence in the country following World War I. What comparisons that can be made between the Vietnam War and the American War for Independence? Rated R.

Hoffa (1992). Jack Nicholson plays Jimmy Hoffa and Danny DiVito plays his right hand man in this convincing re-enactment of the life and presumed death of one of America's most well known labor leaders. The development of the Teamsters and its tremendous influence are illustrated very well, as is a plausible account of Hoffa's demise. What resources were necessary to make the social movement of the Teamsters successful? After reaching its original goals, what direction did the Teamsters take? Why was this option the one chosen? Rated R.

Malcolm X (1992). Spike Lee directs Denzel Washington and Angela Bassett in this moving biography of black activist Malcolm “X” Shabaz. Lee traces Shabaz’s life as he goes through a series of changes from street hustler to prison inmate to religious convert as he ascends to national leadership while preaching the teachings of Elijah Muhammad. The film is considered to be an excellent portrait of a controversial leader who was eventually assassinated by one of his own followers. What type of social movement is illustrated by Shabaz’s efforts? How effective was he in mobilizing resources? How could the movement have been more successful? Rated PG-13.

Mandela (1987). Danny Glover and Alfre Woodard play Nelson and Winnie Mandela, South African natives who have spent their lives fighting the apartheid government of the Union of South Africa. Nelson spent most of his life in hiding or in prison for political crimes, but the anti-apartheid movement he introduced was eventually successful. What were the resources necessary to make the social movement depicted in this film successful? How are the resources needed by the anti-apartheid movement different than the resources needed in a social movement in a western, industrialized democracy? After reaching its original goals, what direction can a movement take? Made for TV. Not Rated.

The Patriot (2000). Benjamin Martin (Mel Gibson) is *The Patriot*, a reluctant hero who is swept into the American Revolution when the war reaches his home and threatens his family. Now a man of peace, Martin has already witnessed the horrors of war in the French and Indian conflicts in the prior decade. What type of collective behavior is illustrated by the film? What type of social movement was the American Revolution? After the movement was successful, what became of it? Did it dissipate or undergo goal displacement? Explain. Rated R.

The 60’s: The Movie Event of a Generation (1999). *The 60’s* is an epic blend of music, drama, and real-life events that bring that decade’s most explosive events to life. Two American families, one white and one black, are torn apart by the war in Vietnam and the war in the streets. Current events are often compared to this period that initiated the civil rights movement, peaceful protests, free love, and the fear of nuclear annihilation. Identify the social movements of the 60s and classify each as to its type, its success, and what became of it. Made for TV. Not Rated.

Chapter Eighteen

Human Ecology and the Environment

The Day After Tomorrow (2004)

Major Application: Human Ecology and the Environment

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Research Methods, Society and Social Change, Education and Society, Political Systems, Collective Behavior and Social Change, Technology and Social Change

Major Characters: Dennis Quaid as Jack Hall
Jake Gyllenhaal as Sam Hall
Emmy Rossum as Laura Chapman
Dash Mihok as Jason Evans
Jay O. Sanders as Frank Harris
Sela Ward as Dr. Lucy Hall
Austin Nichols as J.D.
Arjay Smith as Brian Parks
Tamlyn Tomita as Janet Tokada
Sasha Roiz as Parker
Ian Holm as Terry Rapson
Kenneth Welsh as Vice-President Becker

MPAA Rating: PG-13 Intense situations of peril

Synopsis of Film: Climatologist Jack Hall (Dennis Quaid) discovers erratic changes in weather patterns that are altering the climate. Because of the years of abuse from global warming and the greenhouse effect, Mother Nature has finally had it and unleashes a cataclysmic barrage of hurricanes, floods, and other natural disasters just prior to a global freeze. Hall is faced with not only predicting what will happen next as a climatologist, but must also rescue his son Sam (Jake Gyllenhaal) who is trapped in New York as the mayhem intensifies.

Exercises and Questions

1. What warnings preceded the global weather change? Of these, which ones were the result of man's disregard for the environment?
2. What types of research and what research methods did Jack Hall employ in his research on climate? How did the social factor enter into his research?
3. Which of the three sociological perspectives does the scenario of the film best illustrate and why?
4. Why did the politicians, industrialists, and others ignore the warnings of the climatologists who predicted the cataclysmic weather change? How does the behavior of

these people in the film correspond to the behavior of real life individuals in today's society?

5. Research the major concerns scientists have as the cause of global warming using the internet, professional journals, and news magazines. How do your findings parallel the warnings made by the scientists in *The Day After Tomorrow*.
6. What impact did the catastrophic change in weather have on society? Considering the mayhem created by actual events such as earthquakes, floods, and major snow storms, what would be your prediction regarding the survivability of the human race in the event of a "day after tomorrow" incident?
7. What theory of collective behavior explains the panic that followed the tidal wave in New York City?
8. During an incident such as this, what type of leadership style would be most effective in attempting to cope with the incident?

A Civil Action (1998)

Major Application: Human Ecology and the Environment

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Research Methods, Society and Social Groups, Deviance and Social Control, Healthcare and Medicine, Economic Systems, Technology and Social Change

Major Characters: John Travolta as Jan Schlichtmann, the lead attorney in the litigation
Robert Duvall as Jerome Facher, the lead attorney for Beatrice Foods
Tony Shalhoub as Schlichtmann's law firm partner
William H. Macy as James Gordon, the business manager for Schlichtmann's law firm
Zeljko Ivanek as Bill Crowley
Bruce Norris as William Cheeseman
John Lithgow as Judge Walter J. Skinner
Kathleen Quinlan as Anne Anderson, the person who entices Schlichtmann to take their cases
Peter Jacobson as Neil Jacobs
Mary Mara as Kathy Boyer
James Gandolfini as Al Love
Stephen Fry as Pinder
Dan Hedaya as John Riley, the owner of the tanning factory

MPAA Rating: PG-13 Harsh Language

Synopsis of Film: Jan Schlichtmann (John Travolta) is a tenacious personal injury lawyer recruited by Anne Anderson (Kathleen Quinlan) to represent a group of families from Woburn, Massachusetts. In Woburn, 12 children have died in the past 15 years from leukemia. Initially, Schlichtmann tries to politely dump the case because he sees it beyond the means of his firm's expertise and financial capability. As he drives away from Woburn, he has a change of heart. Whether or not this change in attitude is based on a true concern for the plight of the families or the potential millions of dollars the case may be worth is unclear. But trying to prove who is responsible for contaminating the water supply of this small community becomes Schlichtmann's obsession. He initially traces the contamination of the water supply to a leather production company owned by John Riley (Dan Hedaya) which is a subsidiary of corporate giant Beatrice Foods and the major employer for the community. But proving the blame for the contamination is near impossible. Faced with loyal employees who refuse to testify, the massive legal capabilities of Beatrice Foods, the expense of preparing the case, and a presiding judge who seems to be on the side of corporate America, Schlichtmann and his firm lose almost everything before winning a modest settlement.

Questions and Exercises

1. The film illustrates the dumping of the toxic waste into the water supply of Woburn, MA which resulted in 12 deaths over a 15 year period due to leukemia. What other incidents of industrial dumping were common in the 20th century and what were their results?
 2. What is the obvious link between dumping of hazardous waste and the illnesses experienced by members of Woburn? Why was being "obvious" not much of a help when the case entered litigation? Why is what is "obvious" in society not necessarily valuable to the sociologist?
 3. Without a "whistleblower" what is the likelihood of a case such as this ever coming to trial, let alone being settled?
 4. Develop a list of reasons why cases such as the one in the film fail to become resolved?
 5. Which sociological perspective is best illustrated by the storyline of the film? How does this perspective apply to society today?
 6. During the course of the litigation, Jerome Facher (Robert Duvall), the head attorney for Beatrice Foods tells Schlichtmann that "truth is at the bottom of a bottomless pit once the issue enters litigation." What did Facher mean by this? Do you agree with Facher's assessment of the situation?
 7. Without going into litigation, how can issues such as the one that faced the citizens of Woburn be resolved?
 8. What type of social movement would be most appropriate to develop to address the issue at Woburn? Develop a plan of action for such a social movement that may or may not include litigation.
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Other Films to Consider

Armageddon (1998). The world is at the brink of destruction. All that stands between an asteroid the size of Texas and a sure collision with earth is Bruce Willis and a band of red neck, macho oil drillers recruited by NASA. Although the scenario of how the band of rough necks saves the planet is mostly unbelievable, such a collision has actually occurred in the distant past. If the situation should repeat itself with a chunk of rock less than half the size of the asteroid in the movie, school is out for everybody! After viewing the film, research what the scientific community is doing to guard against a real life Armageddon occurring today. Rated PG-13.

Chernobyl: The Final Warning (1991). This documentary film takes a hard look at the worldwide environmental impact of the Chernobyl nuclear accident in 1986. It also examines a family affected by the disaster. After viewing the film, research what this accident actually cost in the terms of lives lost, its impact on the economy of the Soviet Union, and the lingering affects the incident is still having on the residents of the area and the former Soviet republics. Not Rated.

Peacemaker (1998). One missing nuclear warhead forces the super powers to cooperate with each other to stop a renegade Russian general and Serbian terrorists looking to make an international statement in New York City. The story line is timely in today's unsettling state of world affairs. It also provides insight into the ethnic differences that instigate terrorism and the response of the authorities to prevent an environmental disaster. Based on the film, what is the potential for a similar incident actually occurring with only minor changes in the plot and players? Rated R.

Silkwood (1984). In an Oklahoma nuclear plant, workers are being exposed to plutonium radiation. Karen Silkwood (Meryl Streep) is a union activist who is determined to go public with the problem and demand changes that will protect workers from continued harm. Silkwood is mysteriously killed before she can make the changes she envisions, but her legacy was carried out in a successful court battle against the firm. What do *A Civil Action*, *Silkwood*, and *Chernobyl: The Final Warning* have in common in depicting threats to both people and the environment? In each case, why was it so difficult to trace the problem to its roots and correct the threat? Are there issues of national security that overshadow the public's right to health and safety? Under what conditions would they exist? Rated R.

The Burning Season (1994). This is a highly recommended story of Brazil's environmental activist Chico Mendez (Raul Julia). A poor rubber-trapper, Mendez opposes the corporate giants who wish to clear-cut the forest to make way for cattle grazing country. Mendez is eventually murdered as he fights to protect his people and his way of life. Based upon your viewing of *The Burning Season* and information from your textbook, consider the plight of the Amazon rain forest. Explain how the availability and control of natural resources in preindustrial societies, combined with population issues, pits developers against the populous. What is the long-term impact of the rainforest destruction on the world's ecological balance? Made for TV. Not Rated.

Things to Come (1936). Written by H.G. Wells, this 1936 futuristic drama visualizes the future in which a horrific war, lasting more than 30 years, is followed by plague and rebellion.

Raymond Massey plays the leader of the new world who opposes a despotic wartime ruler. In *Things to Come*, H.G. Wells makes predictions about the future. How close was he to predicting the future accurately, providing events can be viewed figuratively and not necessarily specific? If you were to make a set of predictions for the state of the world in 2075, what would your predictions include? Not Rated.

Chapter Nineteen Technology and Social Change

Enemy of the State (1998)

Major Application: Technology and Social Change

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Culture, Deviance and Social Control, Social Stratification, Education and Society, Political Systems, Collective Behavior and Social Change

Major Characters: Will Smith as Attorney Robert Clayton Dean
Gene Hackman as former NSA agent Edward “Brill” Lyle
John Voight as corrupt politician Thomas Brian Reynolds
Lisa Bonet as Rachel F. Banks
Regina King as Carla Dean, the wife of attorney Robert Dean
Jason Robar as Congressman Phil Hammersly, murdered by Reynolds’ renegade agents in the first scenes of the film
Stuart Wilson as Congressman Sam Albert who is the major advocate of the controversial surveillance bill
Jason Lee as Daniel Leon Zavitz, the environmentalist with the video tape of Congressman Hammersly’s murder

MPAA Rating: R Language and violence, some racial slurs

Synopsis of Film: Released three years prior to the attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon by Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, *Enemy of the State* provided an insight into what was to come in respect to government surveillance. Conspiracy theorists could even fabricate a causal link between the attack on the World Trade Center and the efforts of the government to have the public accept a greater increase in governmental powers under the guise of “national security.”

Be that as it may, Robert Clayton Dean (Will Smith) is a successful labor attorney who is drawn into the murder of Congressman Phil Hammersly (Jason Robar). Congressman Hammersly opposes a new security bill that would give law enforcement and intelligence agencies increased powers of surveillance and intrusion into the lives of private, law abiding citizens. Championing the bill is Thomas Brian Reynolds (Jon Voight) who does a great job playing the character we all love to hate. By accident, an environmentalist, Daniel Leon Zavitz (Jason Lee) records the murder of Congressman Hammersly by Reynolds and his team of NSA goons. In an effort to escape the government goons who become aware of his possession of the incriminating film, Zavitz plants the film on Dean who he runs into purely by accident. The result is a series of failed efforts by Reynolds and his men to force Dean into giving up the tape. In the process, Dean is discredited by the government by making him the focus of every intelligence resource at their disposal including high resolution satellites, eaves dropping equipment, and homing beacons.

Edward “Brill” Lyle (Gene Hackman) becomes entangled in the plot after a colleague of Dean’s, Rachel Banks (Lisa Bonet), is killed by Reynolds’ men and makes the murder look like it was committed by Dean. Banks was the daughter of Brill’s partner when he worked for the “agency.” Together, Dean and Brill orchestrate an elaborate plan to bring the killers of Banks to justice and expose the surveillance bill. In the process they fight fire with fire as the talented and semi-retired Brill dishes up some of Reynolds’ own medicine to settle their score against the rogue agents.

On the surface, *Enemy of the State* is a fast-paced thriller with plenty of action, chase scenes, and thrills featuring a cast of superb actors directed by Tony Scott. Beneath the entertaining quality of the film is a telling commentary of government surveillance. It is a truth-in-fiction story that makes a point about government intrusion into privacy and the stripping away of individual rights.

Exercises and Questions

1. How are the political systems interrelated with the military and technology? How does this create an advantage for the government and military not shared by the common citizen?
2. How does this film illustrate the relationship between technology and power and support the belief that “absolute power corrupts absolutely”.
3. What sociological perspective best illustrates the plot of this film? Why?
4. While watching the Larry King show, Carla Dean refers to Representative Sam Albert as “a fascist gas bag” just prior to Albert’s comment, “when buildings start blowing up, people’s priorities tend to change...” To what degree is Carla’s description of Albert accurate and Albert’s assessment of the situation accurate? How does this compare to what transpired on September 11, 2001 and shortly thereafter?
5. Although the rogue agents and corrupt politician (Voight) use all the technology at their disposal for illegal purposes, what are some positive uses of the same technology to improve the quality of life for the average American?
6. Brill lives in “a jar” to protect his privacy. Without going into total seclusion and living in a “jar,” what are some of the practical things a person can do to (or not do) to safeguard their personal freedom and privacy?
7. Why is “fighting the peace” much more difficult than “fighting the war” as Reynolds (Voight) argues with Brill (Hackman) when they first meet to discuss exchanging of the video tape? Does “fighting the peace” justify the measures taken by the government as shown in the film?
8. If the passage of the Telecommunications Security and Privacy Act would have prevented the destruction of the World Trade Center and the loss of over 3,000 innocent

civilians, would this justify such as act and the increased power of the government? Why or why not?

9. Where do we draw the line between the protection of national security that includes the government's need to obtain intelligence data and the protection of civil liberties, particularly the sanctity of one's home?
10. How have governments used power and intelligence to control their citizens even before the advent of spy satellites, electronic "bugs", and other highly technological devices as featured in the film? What lessons can be learned from these past experiences?

The Sixth Day (2000)

Major Application: Technology and Social Change

Secondary Applications: Sociological Perspectives, Research Methods, Culture, Society and Social Groups, Socialization and Life Course, Deviance and Social Control, Social Stratification, Political Systems, Technology, Collective Behavior, and Social Change

Major Characters: Arnold Schwarzenegger as Adam Gibson, owner of an air charter service that is cloned by mistake
Michael Rapaport as Hank Morgan, Gibson's partner in the charter service
Tony Goldwyn as Michael Drucker, the owner of a massive cloning Industry that is only allowed to clone animals, not humans
Michael Rooker as Robert Marshall, the head of Drucker's secret police
Sarah Wynter as Talia Ellsworth, the second member of Drucker's secret police
Robert Duvall as Dr. Griffin Weir, the medical genius behind Drucker Industries and the cloning technique

MPAA Rating: PG-13 Strong action violence, brief strong language and some sensuality

Synopsis of Film: In the opening scenes of the film, a message is flashed on the screen: "In the near future....sooner than you think." This warning introduces the viewer to a futuristic tale about cloning and the ramifications such a process could have on society and the entire human race. Adam Gibson (Arnold Schwarzenegger) owns an air transport business and is called upon to fly industrial cloning giant, Michael Drucker (Tony Goldwyn) to an appointment in the mountains. Prior to doing so, Gibson and his partner, Hank Morgan (Michael Rapaport) are given an eye exam and blood test by Drucker's associates which they believe to be simply a matter of routine. What follows is far from routine. Drucker, Hank Morgan, and the crew of the charter are murdered by anti-cloning fundamentalists. Gibson, who didn't make the flight, returns home only to find a body double has taken his place with his family, and a group of secret police from Drucker Industries arrive to take Gibson into custody with the intent to

terminate him. The result is a dazed and bewildered Gibson who seeks to unravel the mystery behind what has happened to his wife and family.

As the plot unfolds, several surprises are in store for Gibson as he uncovers a massive conspiracy by Drucker to essentially control the world through the human cloning of prominent leaders. The story line, although futuristic and conspiracy laden, presents insight into an issue is hotly debated in the medical field today.

Exercises and Questions

1. If medical science had the ability to clone organs (heart, lungs, kidneys, and so on) needed by terminally-ill patients, should it be allowed to do so and the use of these manufactured organs be the decision of the physician and his or her patient? Why or why not?
2. If medical science could develop a hybrid strain of an existing animal that had various organs interchangeable with humans, should such a program be pursued?
3. What are the similarities and differences between using either cloned “parts” or organs harvested from selectively bred stock and the well respected donor program that exists today?
4. When Gibson (Schwarzenegger) visits Morgan (Rapaport) at his apartment, he finds Morgan involved with his virtual girlfriend which is a computer generated image. To this, Gibson responds to Morgan, “Here you are a grown man and your primary relationship is with a piece of software.” What are some uses of the computer today that have replaced or greatly curtailed traditional efforts in socialization, entertainment, and business?
5. When Oliver (the Gibson’s pet dog) dies, Natalie (Wendy Crewson) tries to convince her husband they should go to Repet for a cloned replacement. To this, Adam emphasizes that his daughter must learn the “natural cycle of life” and accept Oliver’s passing. In this situation, would you support Natalie’s view or Adam’s? Why?
6. How does the anti-clone demonstrators outside the Repet Center compare to other demonstrations common today, such as the Pro-Life demonstrations outside Planned Parenthood clinics.
7. What is the Sixth Day rule and why is it called that?
8. Just because science has the ability to clone animals (and even humans), should it be done? Why or why not?
9. After the one Gibson realizes he has been cloned, Talia Ellsworth, the member of the secret police who was cloned four times, remarks to Gibson, “It (being cloned) kinda takes the fun out of being alive.” Why would this be so? If you knew you could be cloned following death, how would it change your life and the activities of others?

10. In defending his position on cloning, Drucker tells Gibson, “we won’t have to lose our best people...we won’t have to lose our Mozarts and Martin Luther King Jr.” What are some of the ramifications, both positive and negative or perpetuating an individual’s existence, even if they are “one of our best people.”
 11. Assume there is a divine force in the universe, some call it God. This force has permitted the evolution of mankind to the point that it has the capability of such things as creating life, cloning, and other procedures that are often called “playing God” by groups who oppose such technology. Is this a fair characterization to describe the advancement of science as “playing God”? Why or why not? Is there a dividing line between “playing God” and responsible medicine? If so, where is the line?
 12. How does the plot by Drucker to control government and industry through the cloning process compare to other efforts by dictators to control nations, and even the world, through the more overt means of the use of military force?
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Other Films to Consider

Apollo 13 (1995). *Apollo 13*, directed by Ron Howard and starring Tom Hanks is a docu-drama of the real-life crisis of the Apollo 13 astronauts. The film illustrates the technological marvels man has come to develop as well as the perils that go with them. In contrast, it also demonstrates the low-tech advantage in keeping systems simple and the indispensable need for human ingenuity and problem solving. After viewing the film, describe how highly technological machines can be reduced to rubble by one simple oversight. How does low-tech innovation save the astronauts on more than one occasion? Rated PG.

The Right Stuff (1983). *The Right Stuff* is an excellent account of the origins of the American space program and the personnel who made it possible. The movie traces the success of Americans in exploring outer space beginning with the breaking of the sound barrier by Chuck Yeager and concluding with the final Mercury mission. What role did sociological research play in the selection of the original astronauts and the progress of America’s space program? How did the success of the space program lead to innovations that benefited the average American? What were the personal characteristics the original seven astronauts shared that made them “the right stuff”? Rated PG.

The Net (1995). *The Net* is a predictable mystery that pits a vulnerable computer whiz (Sandra Bullock) against the bad guys who want a disc she possesses. The underlying theme of this film is not its plot, but the concept that our computer age has made it possible to erase someone’s identity from the world’s complex internet of databases. *The Net* is rated PG-13.

Changing Lanes (2002) starring Samuel L. Jackson and Ben Affleck presents a similar and even more believable account of identity theft in our technologically advanced society. *Changing Lanes* is rated R. What safeguards can you take to protect yourself from identity theft and other forms of computer generated crime as illustrated in both films? Should your employer have the

right to access your personal e-mails and what you have viewed on your computer at work? Does your employer have the right to discipline you for sending unauthorized e-mails or viewing inappropriate or non-work-related material on company time with a company computer? Support your answer.

Chernobyl: The Final Warning (1991). This documentary film takes a hard look at the worldwide environmental impact of the Chernobyl nuclear accident in 1986. It also examines a family affected by the disaster. After viewing the film, research what this accident actually cost in the terms of lives lost, its impact on the economy of the Soviet Union, and the lingering affects the incident is still having on the residents of the area and the former Soviet republics. Is the potential cost of nuclear energy worth the risk? Not Rated.

Silkwood (1984). In an Oklahoma nuclear plant, workers are being exposed to plutonium radiation. Karen Silkwood (Meryl Streep) is a union activist who is determined to go public with the problem and demand changes that will protect workers from continued harm. Silkwood is mysteriously killed before she can make the changes she envisions, but her legacy was carried out in a successful court battle against the firm. What do *Silkwood*, and *Chernobyl: The Final Warning* have in common in depicting the threats technology has created to both people and the environment? In each case, why was it so difficult to trace the problem to its roots and correct the threat? Are there issues of national security that overshadow the public's right to health and safety? Under what conditions would they exist? If not for the technological advancements made to provide nuclear energy, what are the options and their consequences? Rated R.

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